

# BROADWAY

*A Play*  
*by*

PHILIP DUNNING  
*and*  
GEORGE ABBOTT

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*Hart*  
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AND  
**GEORGE ABBOTT**

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GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY  
on Murray Hill : New York

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BROADWAY  
— A —  
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## PREFACE

Have you ever sat on a hillside so high above a little town that you could look down on its toy-like spires, its nursery-red rooftrees, its fantastic curling smoke, its spider-web of streets and footways and, so sitting, have you noticed how its myriad faint sounds hum a kind of gentle, homey tune—the tune of that little town?

Some ears are so acute that, even at a blurring distance, they can separate the violin notes from the cellos, can hear the French horns sharp and clear and pluck the harp-strings out of all the chords the orchestra would blend. Such a one, surely, was Lewis Dodd, the oblivious pagan who strides through the pages of that brilliant novel “The Constant Nymph.” Dodd and his new, uneasy bride are loitering on such a hillside above a little fishing-village with the twinkle and scurry of small boat-lamps marking out the devious line of the Mediterranean shore far below them.

“Lewis!” she complains, “Stop throwing stones! I don’t believe you’ve listened to a single word I’ve been saying!”

“Yes, I have. You were talking about jugs. I’m listening. I’m listening to you and a dozen other things as well.”

“There aren’t a dozen other things. There’s only

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. . . the chapel bell, and some men shouting in the boats down on the quay . . . and a dog barking, and some ducks in the garden below."

"Not bad! You've missed about fifty larks in the sky, and the grasshoppers all around us, and a car changing gear on the hill, and the oars in the rowlocks of that boat putting out, and the children playing, and the goat bells away on the hill behind us, and I think I can hear a smithy."

"What a babel it sounds! I'd have said it was a quiet evening."

"So it is. It's so quiet that you can hear every sound in it. Generally there's too much noise for that."

To such ears as his, I suspect that each town in the world must play its own concerto and that, blindfolded, he could be led to each high hill and say: "This is Avignon" or "This is Seattle." To the average listener on the Palisades, "there's too much noise for that."

But at midnight, the hubbub of commerce dies down, the snores of the sober and toil-worn sink to an indistinguishable hum and then, sharp and clear, New York plays a cruel, crazy tune of its own. It was given to the men who compounded this jaunty, gamin melodrama called "Broadway" to distill it from the syncopated, defiant, mocking sounds a-quiver in the golden haze that hangs at midnight above the centre of the island of Manhattan. Of all the scores of plays that shuffled in endless procession along Broadway in the year of grace, 1926, the one which most perfectly caught the accent of the city's voice was this play named after the

great Midway itself, this taut and telling and tingling cartoon which, produced with uncommon imagination and resource, was presented to New York at the Broadhurst Theatre on the night of September 16, 1926.

The theatre is at its best when it is journalistic, when it makes its fable and its parable out of the life streaming down its own street, when the pageant on its stage is just such a cartoon and criticism of the land and day lying across the sill of the stage door. So journalistic is "Broadway" that, on the night when it was new in New York, I ventured the suggestion that its manuscript could scarcely have been delivered through the ordinary snail-paced channels. It must have come in over the ticker. So journalistic is "Broadway" in the pell-mell millrace of this era that I doubt if a Rip Van Winkle who had dropped off to sleep the night of the première of "Within the Law" back in 1912 and awakened just in time to attend its logical successor at the Broadhurst fourteen years later, would have understood or believed any of its entirely plausible plot, would have recognized half the words spoken in the argot of its people or would have experienced without painful shock the greater freedom of speech and the more honest natural history which, in the age of the New Candor, lends character and substance even to the plays concocted to entertain the multitude.

Indeed, when, in the last month of 1926, a company set sail from New York to play "Broadway" in London,

I think the management must have itched to send a lecturer on ahead of the show. Just as Professor Clayton Hamilton now goes ahead of Mrs. Fiske in "Ghosts" to get the provinces mentally adjusted to the demands of an Ibsen tragedy, so it would have been no bad thing to send some Burton Holmes to lecture on the fantastic new folkways of Manhattan Island lest London think the authors of "Broadway" had invented the nightmare panorama of passion and prohibition and politics which, as a matter of fact, does not tell the half of it.

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT.

## CAST

(As played for the first time at the Broadhurst Theatre,  
New York)

NICK VERDIS.....	<i>Paul Porcasi</i>
ROY LANE.....	<i>Lee Tracy</i>
LIL RICE.....	<i>Clare Woodbury</i>
KATIE .....	<i>Ann Preston</i>
JOE .....	<i>Joseph Spurin-Calleia</i>
MAZIE SMITH.....	<i>Mildred Wall</i>
RUBY .....	<i>Edith Van Cleve</i>
PEARL .....	<i>Eloise Stream</i>
GRACE .....	<i>Molly Ricardel</i>
ANN .....	<i>Constance Brown</i>
BILLIE MOORE .....	<i>Sylvia Field</i>
STEVE CRANDALL .....	<i>Robert Gleckler</i>
DOLPH .....	<i>Henry Sherwood</i>
"PORKY" THOMPSON .....	<i>William Foran</i>
"SCAR" EDWARDS .....	<i>John Wray</i>
DAN McCORN .....	<i>Thomas Jackson</i>
BENNY .....	<i>Frank Verigun</i>
LARRY .....	<i>Millard Mitchell</i>
MIKE .....	<i>Roy R. Lloyd</i>

Gangsters, Waiters



## THE SETTING

We are looking at the rather gaudy side room of a night club. There is a carpeted stairway at left, a heavy oak door with a grated slide peek-hole in it, just below the stairs; at the back double doors, now closed, lead to a private party room: on the right, double doors open into a hallway running at right angles—the hall is three feet wide and across it swinging doors lead into the cabaret proper. Nick's office is at the extreme right.

There is a piano, poker machine, wall phone and a number of red chairs.



**BROADWAY: Act One**



## *Broadway*

The rising curtain discloses the orange-lit, tinsel magnificence of the private party-room at the Paradise Night Club. To the tinny obbligato made by "Lil" Rice at the piano, five chorus girls are in line singing and dancing one of the numbers from the revue. The rehearsal is under the direction of Nick, a middle-aged Greek, mercenary and hard.

LIL, the prima donna of the cabaret, at the piano,— a heavy, middle-aged woman with a certain amount of good looks, which, however, have long since lost their bloom. She rolls her own, and removes tight slippers from swollen feet whenever occasion permits.

ROY LANE, a typical song and dance man, with his coat off, sleeves rolled up, is leading the number. The chorus girls, MAZIE, GRACE, RUBY, PEARL, and ANNE are in line behind Roy.

Some of the girls are in street clothes, others in practice clothes. One or two have their skirts pinned up so as to give their legs freedom for the dance. Some of the girls' coats, hats, wraps,

etc., are hanging on hooks or thrown on chairs or tables.

JOE, an Italian waiter, enters from cabaret, takes pin-wheel effect to cabaret.

*Nick*

(*As they dance*) Hey, straighten your line—You. Straighten it up. Now, listen, don't forget to smile. Pearl—some pep. (*Girls continue to dance in straightened line*) (JOE has returned to carry out spot-light) Shake it, shake it. (*Shouts*) No, no! stop! (*They all stop guiltily*) Pearl, watch what you're doing.

*Pearl*

(*Under her breath, as she turns away*) Go fry an egg.

*Roy*

(*To Pearl*) You went into that step on the off-beat, girlie.

*Nick*

(*To the dancers*) For God's sake, think what you're doing, will you? Now once again,—the finish.

*Lil*

Where from?

*Roy*

(*Singing the cue music*) Ta da-ta-tadada-ta-ta.

(*They finish the dance—and break formation.*  
*The orchestra is rendering dance music in*

*the cabaret. This continues at intervals throughout the play. Colored lights play upon the swinging doors)*

*Nick*

*(As they stand waiting for a decision)* No good. Nothing like it. It ain't only you dance with your feet, you gotta smile—show the teets— *(He illustrates)* Last night—oh—hoo. *(Makes a noise of disgust)* Rotten. *(PEARL and RUBY start to whisper)* Pearl, you pay attention. *(They both look away, awed)* I say, smile. Show the teets I say. Like this.

*Roy*

I guess you got it now, ain't you, girls?

*Mazie*

Sure, we have.

*Nick*

Last night a gentleman gets up in the middle of the first number, he says to me, "Outside your place it says: 'Paradise Club—Best Cabaret in New York' —that's what it *says*"—and then he walks out.

*Lil*

Wise crackin' rounder—

*Ruby*

Had to be smart.

*Nick*

He was right. This show ain't bad, it's lousy. Say, look—I pay you—and I can't even look at it. The show's too tame—I have to undress you. Live it up—

*Roy*

The show is good—what there is of it, Boss, but you ought to get in more people.

*Nick*

Yeh?

*Roy*

(Crosses to *Nick*) Sure. *Variety* says the Golden Slipper is doing a nifty biz but they got fourteen weenies and six performers. Now, if you ask me—

*Nick*

Well, I don't ask you—I don't ask nobody, y'un-derstand?

*Roy*

Well, if you don't want good advice, that's your loss.

*Ruby*

Anyhow, I should think you might save some of your raspberries for the one that caused the whole trouble.

*Pearl*

That's what I say.

*Grace and Ann*

Yeah. That's what I say.

*Mazie*

Hey, easy.

*Roy*

(*To them*) Nix, nix.

*Ruby*

How can we get it right if Miss Billie Moore  
don't take the trouble to come to rehearsals?

*Roy*

(*Under his breath*) Hey, don't be a kibitzer.

*Ruby*

Who the hell does she think she is—keep us wait-  
ing for her?

*Roy*

Well, I tell you, Mr. Verdis, I don't think she  
knew there was a rehearsal.

*Ruby*

She was standing right alongside me in the dress-  
ing room last night, when you called it.

*Roy*

No, she had gone.

*Mazie*

Certainly she had.

*Ann*

No, she heard it—she was in the room.

*Grace*

Sure. I saw her.

*Mazie*

You're crazy—I say she was gone.

*Lil*

Oh, for God's sake. (*They stop their clatter and look at her*) Listen, you poor bunch of baby saps—if you spent half your time minding your own business instead of watching other people——

*Roy*

So says I.

*Lil*

When I was your age before I got fat—yeh, fat—I kin say it myself—I was so busy tryin' to get somewhere, trying to get out of the chorus, I didn't know whether anybody was in the dressing room or not. If you're going to rehearse this, do it. If you ain't, tell me, 'cause I ain't supposed to sit here and pound this music box—I sing here and I'm just doing this for Nick.

*Ruby*

You ain't so fat you can't talk—are you——

*Lil*

(*Starts to get up*) Say, listen, Owl, I'll pull all the sawdust out of you if you ain't nice.

*Nick*

Here, here, here, what is this—Lil is right—Gals today ain't nothin' but a lot of jumpin' jacks. Come on,—we'll do it again.

*Grace*

Oh, please—I'm tired.

*Nick*

You're tired! My God, I got better girls in a dump once.

*Roy*

Aw, quit ridin' 'em, will ya, Mr. Verdis?

*Nick*

Ah, shut your face. I run this place.

*Roy*

They been rehearsin' since 8:30 tonight——

*Ruby*

Yeh, and don't forget we can't get this right 'till Billie gets here.

*Ann*

That's what I say.

*Pearl*

Why make us the goat?

*Grace*

How am I gonna give a performance . . .?

*Nick*

Quit it. I don't need no advice what to do with girls that come late.

*Roy*

Listen, Mr. Verdis, Billie's only been in this game a short while——

(JOE enters with a drink for NICK)

*Nick*

And she won't be in it a hell of a while longer. As soon as she comes in, she goes out. (LIL plays "How dry I am." NICK pauses as he is about to drink and looks at her) Joe, get Lil a drink.

(He drinks. The girls lounge about the room, smoking, using nail files, etc. JOE exits to Hall)

*Roy*

Gee, Mr. Verdis, it's not like Billie to fall down on the job. Why, that kid is one of the best lookers and neatest workers you got. You'll make one big mistake if you let her out—she's a mighty nifty little trick.

*Nick*

Why all the talk? You don't work for her—you work for me.

*Roy*

God knows I know that.

*Nick*

Whadda ya mean?

*Roy*

Well—not to pin any bouquets on myself, but where could you get a guy to do what I'm doing for the coffee-and-cake money you're paying me?

*Ruby*

He's off again.

*Roy*

You see it ain't only I can dance, but I got personality——

*Mazie*

Huh!

*Roy*

Personality plus——

*Mazie*

(To Grace) Ain't he a darb?

*Grace*

He hates himself.

*Nick*

Somethin' else ya got is a terrible swell head.

*Roy*

Who, me? Nothin' swell headed about me, Boss—I coulda been that way long ago, if I'd wanted to.

(KATIE, a cigarette girl, enters down hall)

*Nick*

Cut out the belly-achin' and quit anytime you want.

*Katie*

**Mr. Verdis**—

*Nick*

Don't bother me. Can't you see I'm busy?

*Ruby*

In conference.

*Nick*

What? (*He glares at the wrong girl. Then turns back to KATIE*) Well, why don't you go?

*Katie*

It's for Mr. Crandall.

*Nick*

(*Manner changes*) Oh—well—he ain't here yet—  
—who is it? Who wants him?

*Katie*

Them two same gentlemen that was in last night.

*Nick*

All right, I'm coming out. Tell 'em I'm coming. (*KATIE exits down hall*) Don't you go to your dressing room till I come back—we ain't done rehearsing yet. (*Exit down hall*)

(*RUBY thumbs her nose at his back and the girls break into a clamor*)

*Ann*

Gee, it's about time.

*Grace*

He's a slave-driver.

*Mazie*

Thank God.

*Pearl*

Don't he ever get tired?

*Roy*

(Getting on his coat) Oh, lay dead.

*Grace*

Oh, gee, I can't rehearse any more.

*Ann*

Well, you're gonna have to, whether you can or not, so don't start squawking about it.

*Ruby*

Aw, I think I'll quit this dump anyhow.

*Pearl*

I'm gonna buy everybody a drink.

*Ann*

Big hearted.

*Lil*

My God, it can talk.

*Pearl*

What?

*Lil*

That's the first time I heard you speak since you been working here—I always supposed you was a deaf and dumb girl up to now.

*Pearl*

I worked in night clubs before—it don't pay to talk too much.

*Roy*

Like to see anybody stop me talking.

*Mazie*

So would I. (*They all laugh*)

*Grace*

Say, what about this drink?

*Pearl*

Does he let you have the waiter come in here?

*Ann*

Sure—Joe can go anywhere.

*Grace*

Come on, girls, let's go down the hall to the bar—

*Ruby*

Wait a minute—Maybe Pearl don't have to pay for mine. Four to one—a dollar or nothing.

(*Puts coin in poker machine; pushes lever and watches the numbers spin. Is disappointed.*  
*ANN, GRACE, RUBY and PEARL start out hall*)

*Pearl*

(To *Lil*) Ain't you coming? (Roy waves her aside)

*Lil*

They're bringing mine.

*Mazie*

I gotta 'phone.

(*The girls exeunt*)

*Lil*

Where the hell is Joe with my drink—he must be down in the laundry making it. (*Picks up a copy of "Variety"*) If your girl friend gets late to another rehearsal like this, she's gonna get a piece of my mind.

*Roy*

They must be some good reason why Billie ain't here. Listen, *Lil*, don't put it into Nick's head to give her the air, will you? 'Cause she needs the do-ray-me pretty bad—she's got a mother and sister over in Trenton.

*Lil*

I never knew a jane in this business that didn't have.

*Roy*

On the level, I met 'em.

*Mazie*

I room with her and I happen to know she's a good kid.

*Roy*

And believe me, it pays to be good.

*Mazie*

Sure, but not much.

(Searches telephone book for her number)

*Lil*

(Wisely—to Roy) So you met the family, eh?

*Roy*

Yeh, I went out there one Sunday. You see, I take a sort of brotherly interest in that kid.

*Lil*

Brotherly?—

*Roy*

You heard me. Anyhow I and her are fixing up a little vaudeville act together.

*Lil*

Say, sweetheart, why don't you get hep to yourself?

*Roy*

What do you mean?

*Lil*

Ain't you wise that she's given you the bum's rush? Why, that guy's got her so dizzy she don't know you're alive.

*Roy*

Who? Crandall? No, no, not at all. She'll get over that. She ain't used to going to such swell places, that's all. She's got more sense than to care a thing about Crandall himself, personally—it's just the buggy ride—I seen it happen lots of times—young kids get taken out by a rich guy—everything swell; music, lights—they get baffled, you know what I mean, dazzled—and then suddenly they get wise to themselves that the whole works is a lot of boloney and they realize where the real guys in this world is at—

*Lil*

Hoofing in cabarets.

*Roy*

Yeah. That's no kid neither. (MAZIE grunts derisively and crosses to phone) Billie's ambitious to get ahead in this game. (MAZIE drops a nickel in phone box) I guess she'd want to stick with somebody could learn her something, huh?

*Mazie*

Pennsylvania 5000.

*Roy*

Her and me ain't long in this joint anyhow. I'm going to make her something besides a chorus girl.

*Lil*

What's coming off?

*Roy*

As soon as I get Billie ready we're all set for a lot of nice booking on the big time.

*Lil*

Soon as you get Billie ready? Are you—all ready?

*Roy*

Who—me? Well, that's a funny question—you're lookin' at me every night. You can see. I don't belong here.

*Mazie*

Pennsylvania 5000.

(JOE enters from hall with drink. LIL throws cigarette on floor and steps on it preparatory to taking drink)

*Joe*

I couldn't find Pete and he had the keys—that's what kept me.

*Lil*

That's all right. The longer it stands, the better it is. It was only made this afternoon.

*Joe*

Not this stuff. That's last week's.

*Mazie*

Operator, I want Pennsylvania five—— (JOE exits to hall) What? I did give you my nickel.

(*Placated*) Pennsylvania 5000. (*Sits on the back of the chair—her feet on the seat*) Wonder if we could get Pullman service with this phone.

*Lil*

(*Offering glass*) Want a piece of this?

*Roy*

No—I can't drink and do what I do.

*Lil*

(*Drinking*) I see. You ain't never played any of the big time yourself, have you, Personality?

*Roy*

No—but you know as well as I do—it's just the breaks. Look at all the loafers in this man's town—getting by—have they got anything on me? I ask you, have they? This big Greek Nick is always cracking about Jack Donahue—there ain't a thing that guy's doin' that I can't do—yeh—and mebbe I done some of those steps first—but Jack got the breaks and mine ain't here yet.

*Mazie*

Pennsylvania 5000.

*Roy*

Listen, when I was out on the Gus Sun time couple years ago—the manager in McKeesport comes back to my dressing room and tells me—that

never did anybody do the stuff I was doing . . . and the road show of the Follies was only there the week before. But the act with Billie is a sure thing. And then you'll see the old names—with a big ad in Variety, telling 'em—look who's here. God, I dreamed about it years.

*Mazie*

Pennsylvania Hotel? Listen, I want to speak to Mr. Manuel Tellezar—

*Lil*

My God, you can't find a guy with a name like that in a hotel—he's in Ellis Island, dearie.

*Mazie*

Oh, for God's sake—— (*Hangs up in disgust*)

(BILLIE enters back door. *She is a beautiful little creature, despite the obvious common-placeness of her clothes. She enters breathlessly*)

*Lil*

Here she is now.

*Mazie*

Where you been, kid?

*Roy*

Gee whiz, Billie——

*Billie*

Is Mr. Verdis sore?

*Lil*

Oh, no, nobody's sore—just curious.

*Roy*

He was kinda sore till I talked him out of it.  
He may say a little something, but don't pay no  
attention to him. Where the hell you been?

*Billie*

Mr. Crandall said he'd keep track of the time.

*Lil*

Hah!

*Roy*

Oh, him.

*Mazie*

You been out with Steve?

*Billie*

I didn't think there was anything wrong.

*Mazie*

There ain't.

*Roy*

(Referring to corsage of orchids) Did Crandall  
give you them dandylions?

*Mazie*

Listen, Billie, if you was out with Steve, you got  
nothing to worry about cause Nick won't dare say  
a word to you.

*Billie*

I didn't mean to be late, honest, I didn't—but it was just so wonderful and the orchestra was playing special numbers that he asked 'em to play just for me—and it just seemed like I was in a dream or something.

*Lil*

And ain't it hell when you wake up?

*Billie*

I just don't know where the time went, that's all. Roy, here's some more coupons.

*(He accepts the cigar coupons sulkily and adds them to a large roll which he carries in his pocket held together by a rubber band)*

*Mazie*

*(Looking at the phone)* I wonder if that banana gave me a phoney name.

*Billie*

When Mr. Crandall asked me to go to dinner with him, I told him I had a rehearsal and he promised to get me here on time.

*Roy*

Where is the big stiff?

*Billie*

*(Resentful of his tone)* He's outside parking the car.

*Roy*

I guess maybe it's time I give you a piece of advice, Billie—lay off these sugar daddies—I seen a lot of these big cabaret spenders—they're only after one thing.

*Mazie*

(Walking toward phone) I wonder if that banana did give me a phoney name.

*Roy*

Don't let your head get turned by a lot of soft gab—bowing you out of a taxi like you was Texas Guinan or somebody. Don't think that—say, where do you s'pose he got his money anyhow?

*Billie*

In Florida real estate.

*Lil*

Listen, Personality—what difference does it make in this man's town where you get the sugar so long's you got it?

(RUBY, ANN and GRACE enter from hall. At sight of BILLIE they splutter out their indignation)

*Ruby*

Oh, so you finally showed up, eh—Say, you got a nerve.

*Ann*

That's what I say.

*Grace*

What d' you think we are?

(PEARL enters from up hall)

*Billie*

I'm awfully sorry.

(NICK enters from down hall)

*Nick*

Well—so—you did come—What you got to say for yourself—no, don't say it. Of all the dam' nerve

---

(STEVE appears in back door. He is a tall man, handsome in a hard sophisticated way. He wears dinner clothes)

*Steve*

Evening, Nick.

*Nick*

(His manner changing to one of deference) Well, look who's here. Good evening, Mr. Crandall, glad to see you.

*Steve*

Hello, girls.

*Girls*

Hello.

*Steve*

Hello, Lil. (She bows grandly) Hope I didn't keep Billie from rehearsal, Nick.

*Nick*

I was just gonna ask her where she was——

*Steve*

Guess it didn't put you out much.

*Nick*

No, no, it didn't make so much difference.

*Ruby*

(*Bitterly*) I should say not.

*Nick*

What?

*Ruby*

I didn't say a thing.

*Billie*

(*To girls*) Gee, I'm awfully sorry.

*Nick*

You and me can talk about that later.

*Lil*

Well, are we going to rehearse some more or ain't we? I been sitting here for three hours and my feet hurt like hell——

*Nick*

Billie can rehearse separate with Jack Donahue here.

*Roy*

No trouble at all.

*Nick*

So that's all for the rest of you.

*Ruby*

Thank God.

*Steve*

Oh, by the way, I'm tossing a little party tonight, and I'd like to have you all stay.

(*The girls crowd around him except Pearl who starts toward stairs*)

*Mazie*

That's us.

*Ann*

Sure, we will.

*Grace*

You tell 'em.

*Ruby*

Yes, we'll come.

*Steve*

How about it, Pearl?

*Pearl*

(*Pausing*) I don't think I can, Mr. Crandall.

*Steve*

You old cross-patch, I got some Chicago friends just dying to meet you.

*Nick*

She'll be there.

*Pearl*

Sure, I'll be there.

*Steve*

Fine. I can get the party room, can't I, Nick?

*Nick*

Anything you say, Mr. Crandall.

*Steve*

Bye, bye, little one, and thanks again for a very pleasant evening. (*He kisses her hand gallantly. Roy turns aside and gives him the bird, vaudeville fashion—a derisive noise made with the lips. The girls snicker. STEVE looks around, not quite sensing what has happened. NICK hastens to dismiss them*)

*Nick*

Come on now. Get made up, girls. (*They start towards stairs. He turns to STEVE*) Dolph and Porky are outside waiting for you.

*Grace*

Gawd, I'm all in. I'm going to hit the hay to-night—

*Ruby*

If you was a rich man's darling, you wouldn't have to rehearse.

*Mazie*

The trouble with you is, you're jealous cause he don't take you out no more.

*Ruby*

(*Pausing on stairs*) Say, where do you get off to jump me?

*Mazie*

If you don't stop passing remarks about Billie, I'll jump you all right—I'll knock your block off.

*Ruby*

You and who else?

*Lil*

Shut up. Why don't you two hire a hall? (*Pushes past them*)

(*ANN, PEARL, GRACE, LIL and RUBY exeunt upstairs*)

*Steve*

Tell 'em I'll wait for 'em here—

(*NICK exits down hall*)

*Mazie*

I'm going to bust everything God gave her some night—all but her teeth. I'll take them out and give them back to her dentist.

(*MAZIE and BILLIE exeunt upstairs*)

*Roy*

(*Who has been standing watching Steve*) Have a nice ride this afternoon?

*Steve*

(*After looking him over, amused*) Lovely. Sorry you weren't along.

*Roy*

Say, tell me something, will you?

*Steve*

Shoot.

*Roy*

I been knocking around cabarets, dance clubs, vaudeville, everything, for a long time, and what I can't get through my head is this—why is it that all the guys like you are never satisfied with the hundreds of janes that will do anything you want—all the rummies and bums you can have, and by God —you'll quit 'em all to go after one girl that you know is good—why is that, huh?

*Steve*

Do you know some that are good?

*Roy*

I know one that's good.

*Steve*

Who is that?

*Roy*

That's Billie.

*Steve*

You're sure she's good?

*Roy*

I'll give you odds she is.

*Steve*

Where the hell do you get the idea that no one can speak to this Moore girl but you? Who are you? What can you do for her?

*Roy*

(*Almost pleading*) I can do a lot for her, Mr. Crandall. I can put her in the Palace Theatre—inside six months.

*Steve*

Doing what?

*Roy*

Doing a swell dancing act. Now there's my cards on the table, Mr. Crandall, that's what I'm going to do for her. We can't lose. She's got looks, a shape, and with my personality—

*Steve*

Your personality. Oh, I see, that's what you're going to sell. Well, Kid, that's a great idea—just an idea. By the way, I guess I'll have you do a little clowning for a few minutes for my friends tonight—I'm not inviting you to remain on the party, understand, because there won't be dames enough to go round—I'll give you a ten spot.

*Roy*

Sure. I'll do some stuff I ain't done here seeing how you want some laughs.

(NICK enters down hall, bringing DOLPH, a dark wiry man, and PORKY, placid and bald headed—both in evening clothes. Roy sees them coming—starts upstairs)

*Dolph*

Hello, Steve.

*Steve*

Hello, boys. Get Joe in here. Nick, let's have a drink.

(NICK goes up hall)

*Dolph*

(Kidding Roy) Well, if it isn't old Fred Stone himself.

*Roy*

That ain't no insult neither. For his own kind of stuff, he's a hundred percenter, that guy—we can all learn something from him, believe me, even the best of us.

*Porky*

Yeh, but I like your stuff much better.

*Roy*

That's all right. Just keep your eye on me. Pretty soon you'll see my name in lights. It's in the boy,—I can't lose. (Exit upstairs)

*Steve*

Never leave any strychnine around, that guy is

just dying to commit suicide. (*They laugh*) The poor nut.

*Dolph*

I got the bracelet, Steve.

*Steve*

Good. I'll look at it later.

*Porky*

Let's sell this load of stuff to Nick—

*Steve*

(*Warningly*) All right—

(*PORKY stops abruptly. NICK enters up hall*)

*Steve*

(*Casually*) For Christ's sake, Nick, where's all your chairs? (*They all hasten to get him a chair*)

*Dolph*

Here you are, Steve.

*Nick*

We moved them back for rehearsing. It's all your fault, too, keeping that gal out all day.

*Steve*

Ain't sore, are you, Baby?

*Nick*

A lot good it would do me. (*They all laugh*)

*Porky*

(*As they sit*) Had a lucky break last night, Nick.

*Nick*

Yeh, you fellas is always lucky.

*Porky*

I'll say so.

*Dolph*

Got hold of some great stuff.

*Nick*

Yeh?

*Dolph*

You bet; fresh from the boat.

*Nick*

(*On his guard*) Didn't know you had any boat coming.

*Porky*

We didn't. . . .

*Dolph*

But Scar Edwards did. (*They laugh*)

*Nick*

(*Protesting*) This high-jacking is no good.

*Dolph*

But it's luck for you just the same, eh, kid?

*Nick*

I don't know—some day you get in trouble.

*Porky*

Let Steve do the worrying about that.

(JOE enters with drinks)

*Dolph*

Ah, here we are.

(PORKY holds nose and gulps it down)

*Dolph*

If Steve wasn't a big-hearted guy, he'd never sell you this stuff at the same price.

*Nick*

Good, eh?

*Dolph*

It's the real thing, Nick, no kid.

*Nick*

No, I got quite a lot on hand.

(JOE exits)

*Steve*

You got nothin' but cut stuff. You better get in on this—white horse in the clear—not white mule neither—you can get twenty bucks a quart for it.

*Nick*

No, they drank bum stuff so long they don't know when it's good. Anyhow, if I take booze you hijacked off Scar Edwards, he'll come down here and raise hell.

*Steve*

I'll take care of Scar.

*Nick*

If you fight with his mob—then I'll get it in the neck. Of course they won't make no trouble if you keep below 125th Street.

*Steve*

Roll over—trade is where you find it.

*Dolph*

You tell 'em.

*Steve*

My connections are better than any man in this town.

*Dolph*

You bet you.

*Steve*

In that same we got people on our list with streets named after them.

*Porky*

That's no lie either.

*Steve*

You don't think I'm going to let a greasy lot of Polish second-story men tell me where to head in, do you? I'm telling you that I want to clean up this order quick and I think I got a right to count on you.

*Dolph*

Sure. Where would you be today if it wasn't for Steve?

*Porky*

Yeah,—a waiter.

*Steve*

Never mind that—where would you be, as far as that goes?

*Dolph*

Ain't that what I'm sayin'?

*Steve*

It ain't what you was—it's what you are. I cleaned spittoons in my time, fella, and I'm proud of it—that's when Porky tried to make a box fighter out of me, eh, Porky?

*Porky*

I always said you had stuff in you—and now I'm workin' for you.

*Steve*

Say, boys, this business of peddling booze is the second largest industry in the United States right now—give me a year more at it and we'll all retire.

*Nick*

Listen, Steve, I'm on your side.

*Steve*

Well, good God Almighty, would I be sitting here talking to you if I thought you wasn't?

*Nick*

But the Edwards gang might shoot things up.

*Steve*

(*Quietly*) They ain't got a monopoly on it, have they?

*Porky*

Oh, Nick—— (*Waves him laughingly away*)

*Nick*

You're too quick with the gun, Steve; sometime you might get in trouble.—Anyhow, it's no good, a lot of murders—very bad for business. Scar might get me raided again——

*Steve*

(*Hard*) Listen, Nick, you never got poor taking my tips yet——

*Porky*

Damn right he didn't.

*Steve*

And I wouldn't advise you to change right now.

*Nick*

Oh, no. (*Depreciating the idea vehemently*)

*Steve*

Listen, Nick, if my trade is going to grow I got to crush a little competition now and then—I'm taking Scar's booze when I can lay my hands on it, and I'm taking his territory. It's just business, that's

all. Are you with me or not? You gotta declare yourself in or out.

*Nick*

All right—send me what you want—I'll pay for it.

(JOE enters, gets glasses, exits)

*Porky*

Now you got sense.

*Dolph*

Sure.

*Steve*

Now, Nick, this party I'm giving is for the Chicago gang that hits town tonight. They're all itching to show what they can do, and if Edwards starts anything they'll be very handy—see.

*Nick*

Well, I'm counting on you.

*Steve*

Sure, you can count on me, cause I got everything fixed. Now, Porky, you go to the hotel and as soon as the gorillas land, get 'em dressed up and bring 'em around.

*Porky*

Sure.

*Steve*

I want all the girls to stay. Make it right, and tell Joe champagne, flowers and all the rest of it.

*Dolph*

Hot dog!

*Nick*

Anything you say, Steve.

*Steve*

Now go down the cellar and check up your stuff  
and see if you can't make this order a record, eh,  
old timer?

*Nick*

(Crosses to hall door) Anything that's for you,  
I want to do it. Come on, Porky— (Peeks through  
doors) Not so good for Friday night.

(PORKY and NICK *exeunt to hall*)

*Dolph*

(As they are out of hearing) That's the way to  
handle him, all right. He's got a nerve to argue  
after all you've done for him.

*Steve*

Well, we'll spend a lot of money tonight anyhow  
—make Nick feel good. Let's see the bracelet.

(DOLPH *passes it and stands watching*)

Who owned it?

*Dolph*

The fence wouldn't tell me. But he says it was  
lifted off one of the classiest mammas in town.

*Steve*

How much?

*Dolph*

Five yards. He wanted a grand at first. I beat him down.

*Steve*

All right—we'll keep it. It'll look nice on the kid—eh, Dolph?

*Dolph*

You tell 'em. You certainly have fell for that baby, ain't you? (*Plays poker machine*) I never seen you waste so much time on a jane.

*Steve*

(*Coolly*) Don't see too much.

*Dolph*

(*Apologetically*) You know me, Boss.

*Steve*

Got to handle each one different. Wouldn't want me to show my technique first thing, would you?

*Dolph*

Not if you mean what I think you mean.

*Steve*

This gal is a nice kid.

*Dolph*

She won't be after she knows you long.

*Steve*

That's all right too. (DOLPH *plays poker machine*) But you gotta use your head.

*Dolph*

Jesus! This machine is crooked.

(SCAR EDWARDS *enters back door. He is a tense man — slightly overdressed in Broadway fashion*)

*Steve*

You see, she don't belong in this cage at all—consequently you got to treat her different.

*Dolph*

(*Turning and seeing SCAR*) Well, for God's sake.

*Steve*

Hello, Sweetheart.

*Scar*

How are you?

(DOLPH *closes cabaret doors*)

I thought this is where I'd find you.

*Steve*

What made you think that?

*Scar*

Do you think Steve Crandall's the only bird in town that's got ways of findin' things?

*Steve*

Well, I'll tell you, Scar, I wouldn't advise you to do it often.

*Scar*

No?

*Steve*

No. In fact, I think you got a hell of a nerve to come bustin' in this way.

*Scar*

Not much busting about it.

*Steve*

Next time, knock—see——

*Scar*

You don't always knock when you come to visit me.

*Steve*

I don't visit you, Scar.

*Scar*

You visit my neighborhood sometimes, don't you, Steve?

*Steve*

Do you own it?

*Scar*

All depends on how you look at it.

*Steve*

I'm just telling you for your own good, Scar—Come gumshoeing in the back way of a strange place, you know, somebody might take you for a burglar.

*Scar*

(Closes in) I ain't scared of you guys. I come down here to have a showdown—alone—with no gun. (Pats pocket to show he is unarmed) So let's talk turkey.

*Steve*

All right, Edwards, but listen to what I tell you—next time you better let us know when you're coming or you may wish you'd brought your gun.

*Scar*

You don't let me know when you're coming.

*Steve*

Meaning what?

*Scar*

I s'pose you don't know.

*Steve*

You heard me ask you.

*Scar*

Aw, you know goddam well what I mean—you been poaching on me, Steve—you been cutting in on my territory and it's got to stop.

*Dolph*

Will you listen to that—

*Steve*

You own everything above 125th Street, do you?

*Scar*

We stocked that territory and we got a right to it. My mob worked for four years to get things the way we got 'em—and nobody—get that—nobody is goin' to cut in from down here and spoil a nickel's worth of it. You hi-jacked another truckload last night (*STEVE rises*), yes and you been spillin' more jack round for protection than we can afford—we ain't never come down here to horn in on your Broadway trade but you're ruinin' our game up there and I'm here to tell you that you can't get away with it.

*Steve*

If you knew me a little better, you'd know that yelling wouldn't get you much.

*Dolph*

That's just what I was going to say.

*Scar*

Peddle your papers, will you. (*DOLPH walks away squelched. In the cabaret the orchestra can be heard playing George Olsen's Battle Number*) I'm talking to the boss now. I come here for a show-down with you guys, see.

*Steve*

All right. I don't mind a little show-down myself once in a while. You're looking for trouble, is that it?

*Scar*

No, I ain't lookin' for trouble. Nothin' like that. Not that my friends ain't capable of holding up their end, if it comes to that. But I say they's plenty of business for everybody and them what works up the trade should be the ones to get it.

*Steve*

And supposing I say that I'll sell any damn place I can get away with it?

*Scar*

Then I'm warning you that it's dangerous for you to do business in Harlem cause from now on 125th Street is the dead line. Get me?

*Steve*

Yeah?

*Scar*

Yeah.

*Steve*

Well, that's just dandy, Scar. Thanks for the tip-off. Now if you've spoke your piece you can take the air. I don't care about having a public fight with the likes of you because everybody in this place don't know my business yet, and I don't care to have you stand around and broadcast it.

*Scar*

There's a lot of things I can broadcast, if I have to.

*Dolph*

(*Comes to the other side of SCAR*) You heard what the boss said, didn't you?

*Scar*

You too—the both of you—since you're looking for tips, I'll give you another one. I happen to be the guy who can clean up a few murder mysteries in this town. I suppose you don't know who knocked O'Connell off!

*Dolph*

What are you talking about?

*Scar*

And who dumped his body up in Harlem so my mob would get blamed for it?

*Steve*

What the hell are you driving at?

*Scar*

This is what I'm driving at——

*Dolph*

Wait a minute.

*Scar*

I've waited long enough. Now get this—You guys stay down here in your own territory and you

leave my trucks alone. See—cause I got the dope on you, Steve—you croaked O'Connell.

*Dolph*

(*Grabbing his arm*) Look here.

*Scar*

Take your hands off me or I'll bust your God-dam face. You guys can't put me out of business.

(*SCAR is facing DOLPH. STEVE quickly pulls out his gun, presses it against SCAR's back and fires. SCAR pitches forward. DOLPH catches him in his arms. SCAR's hat falls off*)

*Dolph*

Jesus Christ, Steve, what have you done?

*Steve*

(*Remaining cool*) Get hold of him under the arms—quick—walk him out of here——

(*ORCHESTRA still playing battle number—trumpets and shots. DOLPH takes one of SCAR's arms and STEVE the other and they start to walk him out as they would a drunken man*)

Wait a minute.

(*Gets SCAR's hat, puts it on SCAR's head. As STEVE and DOLPH are walking the dead man toward back door under stairs, ROY and BILLIE come downstairs from dressing room in costume*)

*Roy*

Come on, I'll run through the number with you—  
we got time.

(*BILLIE and Roy look over railing and see STEVE and DOLPH with SCAR between them*)

*Roy*

Who's the drunk?

*Steve*

Just one of the boys we're helping home.

(*SCAR, DOLPH and STEVE exeunt back door, closing it after them*)

*Roy*

It's powerful stuff Nick dishes out.

*Pearl*

(*Appears at top of stairs*) Billie, was there a  
shot?

*Roy*

(*Laughs*) That's the band——

*Billie*

They're doing the battle number——

(*ORCHESTRA just finishing Battle Number*)

*Pearl*

I'm nervous as hell tonight.

(*Exits to dressing room*)

*Roy*

(To BILLIE) Come on now. Ready—let's do it together—1-2-3 (They dance)

(NICK enters from hall and stands watching BILLIE and Roy. BILLIE senses his presence and stops dancing)

*Billie*

You didn't want to see me, did you, Mr. Verdis?

*Nick*

I did—but now I don't—all the same you shouldn't miss that rehearsal—

*Billie*

I'm awfully sorry.

*Nick*

Don't let this happen some more.

*Billie*

I won't—thank you, Mr. Verdis.

*Nick*

See if you can dance better tonight.

*Billie*

Yes, sir.

*Roy*

She will. I just came down to skate it over with her. (He takes off coat, revealing the fact that his

*cuffs are sewed into the coat sleeves and that he is bare armed and a bit ragged underneath)* One-two-three-four—

(NICK exits to office)

*Billie*

Wasn't he nice to me though?

*Roy*

Sure, he was afraid he'd lose me if he gave you the gate. The last step, where you went into the side kick, is where it got muddled last night. Now, I'll count it slow—watch me—

(*He hums the tune and they both dance as he counts—1-2-3-4—BILLIE gets mixed up on one of her kicks*)

No—no—that's where you went wrong last night. Second time you do it with the left foot. Ready—again—go—

(*They do the dance again—this time correctly*)

You can't wish a number on—you got to rehearse 'em.

(*She does the dance alone while he hums and counts*)

Fine. That's it. You just keep picking up a little each day and improving and you'll be going fine before long—you'll be as good as I am soon—

(*She demurs*)

Honest. Then we'll tie the merry old can to this saloon, eh, kid?

*Billie*

I s'pose so.

*Roy*

What do you mean—I s'pose so?

*Billie*

Well, that's what I mean—only Mazie says not to count on it, that's all. She says, well, I s'pose she's just kiddin'—but she says it's a pipe dream.

*Roy*

Yeh, no wonder she never gets anywhere with that kind of a outlook, huh?

*(She limbers up, putting her foot on piano and bending down to it)*

That's right, don't forget what I told you. (*He takes her by the back of the neck and helps*) The act is just as good as booked and you'll make a great partner too. We'll soon be copping three hundred a week—one hundred for you and two hundred for me. You could send fifty or so home to your old lady every week instead of ten.

*Billie*

I hope it comes true.

*Roy*

*(Puts on his coat)* Comes true? It's just as good as if I was handing you the money right now.

(*She stops exercise and starts toward stairway*) Is that all you're going to do? Say, Billie, you're still strong for the act, ain't you?

*Billie*

Sure, why not?

*Roy*

Well, you been wasting quite a lot of time lately.

*Billie*

Oh, I don't know.

*Roy*

We used to get in early and have a special rehearsal. Now you been staying out to dinner with some guy or other.

*Billie*

Well, I don't mean to do what's not right—I'll rehearse—only a person ought not to miss wonderful opportunities. I mean, I ought not to miss a chance to go out with Mr. Crandall.

*Roy*

You ought not to miss a chance to go out with me neither.

*Billie*

Well, of course, you're different.

*Roy*

I'll say I am. (*Imitates STEVE*) Bye bye, little one. Thank you for a very pleasant evening—huh. That's the parrot's cracker—that stuff.

*Billie*

Mr. Crandall has been very nice to me— (Roy grunts)—well, he has, Roy—and I don't like you making fun of him.

*Roy*

Well, I don't like him interfering with our act.

*Billie*

He isn't. I'll rehearse any time you say.

*Roy*

It ain't only a matter of rehearsing—you gotta keep your mind on your work. Don't be thinking about hotels and things like that—be thinking about your partner.

*Billie*

Well, I do.

*Roy*

Do you? Say, Billie, suppose we go out after, tie on the feed bag and talk over the act, huh?

*Billie*

Tonight?

*Roy*

Oh, I remember this is the night you go home to see your old lady, ain't it?

*Billie*

Well, this is the night I usually do.

*Roy*

Give her and your sister my love. By the way, Maloney Brothers are breaking in their new act over

in Trenton the last half; if you see 'em around, tell 'em I was asking for 'em.

*Billie*

Well, I don't know that I'll go.

*Roy*

(*Clouds*) Oh.

*Billie*

I thought maybe I ought to stay to Mr. Crandall's party.

*Roy*

Can't they get soused without you?

*Billie*

Mr. Crandall asked me first one of all—he said it would be just flat and stale without me.

*Roy*

That would be tough. Pardon me, while I laugh (*Holds up his sleeve and laughs into it artificially*) ha-ha. (*Resumes the serious tone*) I'm tellin' you to go home—suppose anything ever happened like your old lady kicking the bucket.

*Billie*

(*Walking away*) You would!

*Roy*

Listen, Billie, tell me something straight, will you?

*Billie*

Sure.

*Roy*

Are you falling for this guy?

*Billie*

(*Stalling*) I never thought of such a thing.

*Roy*

Are you falling for anybody?

*Billie*

Mr. Crandall never thinks of me that way at all. He just considers me like a friend or just a kind of pal.

*Roy*

I suppose he's going to adopt you. Just a big brother. You wait a couple of days and I'll give you the low-down on him. I'm gonna do a little detective work myself. Florida real estate—hah!

*Billie*

Now, Roy.

*Roy*

I'm thinking of your career, that's all.

*Billie*

(*Flirting*) Is that all? I thought you might perhaps be thinking about me.

*Roy*

I take a personal interest in you too. After all we're going to be partners, ain't we?

*Billie*

Sure, on the stage.

*Roy*

Sure. (*She starts up stairs—he follows.*) And I know what's best for you. Just think of your career—here you got the opportunity to hook up with me in the act—we mustn't let nothing get in the way. You got talent, kid, when I bring it out. We're likely to be the sensation of vaudeville—everybody talking about us. Why, I can see our names in lights now—Roy Lane and Company.

(*Exits up stairs*)

(*The back door opens and STEVE enters quietly.*

*He holds door open and waits for DOLPH. The latter is frightened. His hat has been pushed to the back of his head. He walks past STEVE and stands waiting. STEVE closes the door—puts hat on piano*)

*Steve*

(*Nodding head toward cabaret*) You better go in there for a while.

*Dolph*

What'll I do?

*Steve*

Why, get yourself something to eat, kid.

*Dolph*

You sure everything's all right?

*Steve*

(*Smiles, faintly scornful*) Ain't got any appetite, huh? (Jovially) You yellow bastard, I didn't think a little thing like that would bother you.

*Dolph*

Say, nothing bothers me if I know what's coming; but Jesus, I never seen nothing like this before.

*Steve*

That's why it's good. I've often thought it would be a nice thing if Scar was out of the way. And look at how it broke for us. Ever see anything prettier in your life? Now if Scar's mob has got any sense, I'll hook up the two gangs and run this town right—all the protection in the world, plenty of profits for everybody.

(*PORKY enters from down hall*)

*Porky*

Well, I got the Chicago boys out there.

*Dolph*

(*Jumps at voice*) Oh, that you, Porky?

*Porky*

All yelling for ring-side seats, so they can see the dimples.

*Dolph*

Well, I guess I'll have a drink.

(*Exits to hall. PORKY watches him puzzled.*

*Turns and senses something eery in STEVE's over-deliberate lighting of a cigarette)*

*Porky*

What's the matter, Steve?

(STEVE *blows out flame of lighter*)

*Steve*

Not a thing in the world, Porky.

*Porky*

You act kind of—

*Steve*

Kind a what?

*Porky*

I don't know.

*Steve*

Neither do I. (LIL *enters on stairs, carrying props*) I'll go ask Nick if he knows.

*Porky*

(*Looking at LIL*) Well, I guess I'll stay out here.

*Steve*

Go to it. (*Starts out*) Lil, have you met my friend Mr. Thompson?

*Lil*

I don't know as I have—How are you?

*Porky*

Pleasure. (*Nods*)

*Steve*

Great admirer of yours. (*Exit to office*)

*Porky*

I've seen you before, Miss Rice.

*Lil*

That so?

*Porky*

Yes, from out in the audience—out in front, I guess they calls it. You might have noticed me last night after your last song—I was applauding and—

*Lil*

They was two of you.

*Porky*

I mean, you know, extra loud—and yelling too—I yelled bravo, bravo.

*Lil*

Was that what you yelled? If I'd known that, I'd a done an encore.

*Porky*

I hadn't been in to see Nick since you joined the troupe. Steve, that is Mr. Crandall,—my business associate—he's in here quite a lot—and I dropped in, and I thought your stuff was extremely good.

*Lil*

Well, I certainly am flattered, Mr. Thompson. Who the hell's been monkeying with my props?

*Porky*

Very interesting, the life back stage.

*Lil*

All depends on how you look at it. Of course it's nicer here than in the regular theatre cause here there's nobody can drop scenery on you—all we got to dodge is the stuff out front.

*Porky*

Well, I'm going to be out in front looking at you.

*Lil*

Don't look at me—just listen to me. I guess when that squab scenery comes out, you won't pay much attention to the old timers.

*Porky*

Whadda you mean, old timers—I'm an old timer myself. Me. I'm allus strong for the guy that's been somewhere and seen something.

*Lil*

That takes me in—I've seen a lot.

*Porky*

Here too.

(DOLPH enters down hall)

*Lil*

There's your boy friend. I'll take the elevator.

*Porky*

Well, Miss Rice, I'd like to see some more of you, sometime.

*Lil*

Stick around.

(*Exits upstairs. DOLPH opens office door and jerks his head to STEVE to come out*)

*Porky*

Hey, listen, there's a gal I could fall for. No skinny-legged, slat-sided baby pigeons like you guys pick. Me, I like a dame that can sit in a Morris chair and fill it.

*Dolph*

Say, Porky, you know Dan McCorn?

*Porky*

I speak to him—I ain't never been arrested by him.

*Dolph*

Cut the comedy. He's out there. Keep an eye on him for a second till I come back, will you?

*Porky*

(*Impressed*) Sure. (*Exit down hall*)

(*STEVE comes from office*)

*Dolph*

There's a bull out there.

*Steve*

What of it?

*Dolph*

Maybe there's something up.

*Steve*

Go home and go to bed.

*Dolph*

There might be.

*Steve*

Do you know him?

*Dolph*

Sure. Dan McCorn.

*Steve*

(*Taking a little interest*) Homicide squad.

What's he doing?

*Dolph*

Sitting there reading a newspaper.

*Steve*

(*Impressed*) That don't look so good. (JOE enters from hall and goes toward office. STEVE takes him by the arm) Joe.

*Joe*

Yes, sir.

*Steve*

Run upstairs and ask Miss Moore—Billie Moore—to step down here.

*Joe*

Sure, Mr. Crandall. (*Exits upstairs*)

*Steve*

You better go out and cool off.

*Dolph*

Don't think I'm shaky, but—

*Steve*

Go on now. Keep out of sight for a while. (JOE appears at the head of the stairs)

*Joe*

She ain't changed yet.

*Steve*

Tell her it's important. (JOE disappears)

*Dolph*

Listen, you better fix the hoofer too.

*Steve*

(Impatient) Keep away from him or you'll get me in trouble—I know how to handle this.

*Dolph*

Listen, you still got that rod on you—let me get rid of it.

*Steve*

Oh, for God's sake, don't have a panic. Who do you think I am, Johnnie the Dope? Should I have my pockets sewed up or something because there's a bull in the next room? (JOE comes downstairs,

*followed by BILLIE in costume for opening number)*  
(To DOLPH) Beat it. (DOLPH goes out down hall. JOE goes up hall)

*Billie*

I haven't quite dressed yet. (*She goes to prop table*)

*Steve*

I won't keep you a minute. Just a little something I want to ask you. (*She comes to him, hooking her dress*) Listen, cute fella, I want to ask you a favor.

*Billie*

Why, Mr. Crandall, of course—

*Steve*

'Tisn't so much. I want you to forget you saw Dolph and me helping that drunken fellow out of here a while ago.

*Billie*

What drunken fellow? Oh, I know—out there—I remember.

*Steve*

Well, I want you to be a good kid and promise to forget to remember.

*Billie*

All right.

*Steve*

You see, he's a big politician—if it got out it might cause a lot of trouble—just thought I'd warn

you so that—you know—if you happened to talk you might get yourself in a bad jam.

*Billie*

Oh, I wouldn't say anything.

*Steve*

I can count on you then.

*Billie*

Positively.

*Steve*

Oh, by the way, here's something else I just happened to think of. (*Takes out handkerchief in which he had wrapped bracelet*) Guess what?

*Billie*

Why, Mr. Crandall—how should I know?

*Steve*

Birthday present for you.

*Billie*

But, Mr. Crandall, I had my birthday.

*Steve*

Be smart and have two of them.

*Billie*

Oh, Steve—Oh, I never saw anything—Oh, Mr. Crandall—why it's beautiful!

*Steve*

I'm glad you like it.

*Billie*

(Without too much conviction) But I couldn't take it.

*Steve*

Now, listen, don't give me any of that silly talk—why, it's just a little trinket that doesn't amount to anything.

(*Buzzer sounds and lights flash*)

*Billie*

Oh, my goodness, there's the opening.

(*MAZIE enters on stairs—with costume, followed by Roy and Girls—all in costume*)

*Mazie*

Hey, kid, you forgot part of your props.

*Billie*

Oh, did I? Thanks, Mazie.

*Roy*

Come on, girls, there's the opening. Make it snappy now.

*Ann*

(*Snatching cigarette from Grace*) Gimme a drag on that weed before you kill it.

*Ruby*

Say, Grace, you better remember what I told you about cutting in front of me in this number.

*Grace*

I will.

*Ruby*

See that you do.

*Mazie*

Aw, tie it outside.

*Ruby*

Who's talking to you?

*Roy*

Get your places. (*Pulls BILLIE away from STEVE*) Every night a first night. They all paid for their seats. Heavy cover. We got to be good.

*Nick*

(*Coming in from office*) Now, girls, tonight some pep; and for God's sake, remember, smile at the men.

*Ruby*

Smile at 'em—it's all we can do to keep from laughing at 'em.

(*With a swell of music Roy and girls exeunt to cabaret. As each one reaches the door, she picks up the dance step and sings, changing her manner from boredom to pep. The music becomes faint as doors close*)

*Nick*

(*Sits*) According to my bookkeeping, I owe myself money—I don't know.

*Steve*

Well, I've heard that before; how much, Nick?  
(DAN McCORN enters from hall door. *He is a man about thirty; matter of fact and rather well dressed*) Well, good old Dan McCorn.

*Dan*

Hello, Boys. (*He turns to look at poker machine. Nick has risen alarmed—STEVE motions him to sit*)

*Nick*

What you want in here?

*Dan*

Oh, just dropped in.

*Steve*

You're unusually sociable, ain't you?

*Dan*

Well, mebbe—I paid the rent today and two grocery bills—that always makes me feel good.

*Nick*

Grocery bills shouldn't worry you if you would listen.

*Steve*

A square dick, huh?

*Dan*

Figure it out yourself.

(JOE comes from hall with two drinks—sees McCORN and quickly exits)

*Dan*

Well, Nick, how's business?

*Nick*

Can't complain.

*Dan*

How's your business, Steve?

*Steve*

So-so.

*Dan*

Extending your trade a little, ain't you?

*Steve*

How do you mean?

*Dan*

Kinda moving up town?

*Steve*

Where do you get that idea?

*Dan*

Oh, I hear everybody's troubles.

*Nick*

And they got a lot of 'em, I bet you.

*Steve*

(Deliberately) Say, Dan, you don't suppose for  
a minute—

*Dan*

That you can't peddle it where you please. No,  
I ain't sayin' that, only, ain't it likely to cause  
trouble?

*Steve*

Trouble?

*Dan*

That's a bad bunch up there. Some of 'em two-term men.

*Nick*

Some of them gorillas of Steve's ain't such a sweet bunch either.

*Dan*

That's what I say—that's why it looks like fireworks. (STEVE glares at NICK)

*Nick*

Wouldn't you think with all the trouble it is to get it—they wouldn't fight over who sells it?

*Steve*

Well, some people ain't never satisfied.

*Dan*

By the way, seen Scar Edwards lately?

*Steve*

(With mild surprise—as though he hadn't quite caught the question) Speaking to me—

*Dan*

Well, not exactly. Have you?

*Steve*

About two weeks ago I saw him—at the races.

*Dan*

Speaking to him?

*Steve*

Why not? I gave him a tip that paid 20 to 1.

*Dan*

Yeah? You didn't see him, then, when he was here tonight?

*Nick*

Huh?

*Steve*

Here? Who?

*Dan*

You didn't, Steve? Huh?

*Steve*

(*Long pause*) Your arm is swelling, Dan, what did you put in it?

*Dan*

Scar Edwards was here, wasn't he?

*Steve*

Listen, Dan, Scar Edwards and me are personal friends, but we don't do business together.

*Dan*

Maybe that's why he came.

*Steve*

Don't be silly.

*Dan*

I'm not.

*Nick*

He wouldn't come to my place.

*Dan*

Well, he was in this neighborhood anyway—that much I know, cause I saw him myself.

*Steve*

You saw him? Where?

*Dan*

Under a blanket in a Westcott Express truck, just a block and a half from here—lying on his face with a slug in his back.

*Nick*

For God's sake.

*Steve*

So they got him, eh? That's too bad—Scar wasn't a bad sort when you knew him.

*Dan*

I hope to tell you.

*Steve*

Well, that's a tough break—I'm sorry to hear it.

*Dan*

Now that I don't sound so silly—who pulled that off?

*Steve*

How the hell should I know?

*Dan*

Funny part of it is, he didn't have a rod on him.

*Nick*

You find him—

*Dan*

No, the Westcott driver found him, when he came out of the lunch room. I got there shortly after.

*Steve*

Can you imagine that driver?

*Dan*

Yeh, lucky thing he found him so soon, still warm when I got there—

*Steve*

(Casually) What time was it?

*Dan*

Must have been—say—twenty minutes or half-past ten.

*Steve*

Well, I've been here all evening, haven't I, Nick?

*Dan*

I didn't ask you for an alibi, but since you mention it—let's have it—who was with you?

*Steve*

(Revealing just a flash of chagrin at his slip, he controls himself and speaks calmly) Why, Porky Thompson, and Nick here part of the time; Billie Moore—one of the girls; most anybody could tell you, they all saw me.

(PORKY comes in from hall)

*Porky*

(To DAN, surprised) Oh, you're here—I was looking at the show and—yeah—how are you?

*Dan*

Thompson, what time were you here with Steve and Nick tonight?

*Porky*

(Hesitatingly. STEVE signals with his hands) I came in—about—five minutes after nine—(STEVE signals again) yes, sir—five minutes after ten.

(STEVE walks away with satisfied expression)

*Dan*

Why so positive?

*Steve*

(Cutting in) I happened to ask him for the correct time when he came in.

*Dan*

You didn't have a watch?

*Steve*

Sure. But I wanted to see if I was right.

*Dan*

When he told you—then you knew you were right—is that it?

*Steve*

(Righteous indignation) Where the hell do you get off to sweat me?

*Porky*

What's the matter—what's up?

*Nick*

Someone killed Scar Edwards.

*Porky*

(*Smiles*) Well, well—(*Sees STEVE's book—changes mood*) Gee, that's too bad.

*Dan*

You guys ain't thinking of goin' in mourning, are you?

(*Roy and girls come back in line with swell of music and faint applause*)

(*LIL enters on stairs*)

*Roy*

Holy gee, but the orchestra put that number on the fritz—a bunch of plumbers—they're off the beat like a night watchman.

*Lil*

Why ain't you guys out there giving the kids a hand?

*Roy*

All set, Lil? I'm going to announce you.

*Lil*

Anybody out there?

*Roy*

Not yet. They don't come in as a rule till just before my big number. (*Exit to cabaret. Heard announcing*) Miss Lillian Rice! (*LIL exits to cabaret as orchestra plays blues*)

(*The girls change into the other costumes which they have left on the prop table*)

*Dan*

Nice looking bunch, Nick.

*Nick*

You got your eyes open, eh, Dan? Would you like to know one of 'em?

*Dan*

That red-headed gal sort of appeals to me.

*Steve*

Don't introduce him to Billie. I'm taking no chances.

*Billie*

(*Hears her name*) What?

*Steve*

Don't have anything to do with these handsome cops.

*Nick*

(*Brings PEARL down*) Pearl, I want you to be nice to my old friend, Dan McCorn, here.

*Pearl*

How are you?

*Dan*

I was thinking I'd seen you somewhere before.

*Pearl*

That's an old one.

*Dan*

On the level. You used to be dancing at—the Golden Bowl, didn't you?

*Pearl*

No, sir; not me. (*She goes back to her dressing table*)

*Dan*

(*Shakes hands with Nick*) Well, boys, I guess there's nothing else I can talk about just now—sorry to have took so much of your time.

*Steve*

(*Comes over to shake*) Hell, Dan, glad to give you all the time we got—only wish I could help you. I know you got your job same as I got mine.

*Nick*

Sure, it's best everybody get along.

*Dan*

Well, so long.

*Nick*

So long, Dan.

*Steve*

Come again, Dan.

*Dan*

Sure. (*Exits to cabaret*)

*Steve*

Porky, take a stroll out. (*PORKY follows DAN*)

*Ruby*

(*Seeing bracelet*) Hey, will you look at that?

(*All girls crowd around*)

*Ann*

Let's see. Where'd you get it?

*Ruby*

Where d' you s'pose she got it?

*Mazie*

Oh, gee the Knickerbocker Ice Company. Gee, you got him going strong.

*Roy*

(*Enters from cabaret*) Well, Boss, they're eating it up out there.

*Ruby*

Well, hoofer, I guess you'll be looking for a new partner.

*Roy*

What?

*Pearl*

Oh, boy, when'd he give it to you?

*Grace*

Some rocks!

*Roy*

(Pushes his way thru girls and looks at bracelet)

What you got there?

*Ann*

Steve gave it to her.

*Roy*

You ain't gonna keep it?

*Mazie*

Certainly she is.

*Roy*

Give it back to him.

*Billie*

Now, Roy—

*Roy*

Listen, Billie, for God's sakes, don't be a fool!

You know what everybody'll be saying about you.

*Billie*

Don't tell me what to do!

*Roy*

I tell you give it back to him.

*Billie*

Listen, General Pershing.

*Roy*

You do what I say.

*Billie*

Mind your own business.

*Roy*

Please, Billie, I'm telling you something straight from the heart—

*Nick*

(*Pushing BILLIE out of the way*) Hey, hey, what you gonna do—have some heart talks instead of doing your number?

*Roy*

No, sir, Mr. Verdis. I'm right here waiting to do my stuff. Nobody can say I don't give the customers one hundred percent every performance. The night my old man died, I went out at the Regent Theatre in Danbury and give as good a performance as I ever done in my life. (*Turns and looks at BILLIE*) And even if a jane I'd put my hope and trust in was going to hell, I could still go out and give 'em my best. Line up, kids.

(*PORKY enters from hall*)

*Porky*

Dan McCorn is sittin' out there waitin'. What to hell's the matter?

*Roy*

There's the cue. Give it to 'em. Cut 'em deep

and let 'em bleed. Here we go. Here we go. Let's mop up.

*(While the two men stand looking at each other inquiringly, the cabaret doors open, the music swells, Roy puts on a little hat with a feather in it, and dances out behind the girls)*

CURTAIN

## ACT TWO

Half an hour later.

Music in cabaret.

PORKY sits picking his teeth—shakes his head pessimistically. He tosses a coin—is dissatisfied with the result.

STEVE enters from hall; closes the double doors.

*Steve*

Good thing I went out there and calmed down them Chicago gorillas. If they kept on talking shop so loud, I'd lost my reputation as a butter and egg man from Florida.

*Porky*

Dan McCorn still out there?

*Steve*

He's talking to one of the pick-ups.

*Porky*

Wish to God he'd go for good.

*Steve*

I don't know—he seems to be having a good time.

*Porky*

I seen 'em act that way before. Believe me, I think he's getting all set to make a pinch.

*Steve*

Cut that out. Don't be so jumpy. What makes you so jumpy every time somebody gets bumped off?

*Porky*

Well, I was thinkin', maybe he's got a lot of bulls hanging around the block for all we know.

(*STEVE lights a cigarette*) Say, Steve, tell me on the square, you know who done it, don't you?

*Steve*

I haven't the faintest idea.

*Porky*

Well, you know it ain't healthy for you to hang around here after Scar's been killed, don't you?

*Steve*

Are you talking to me?

*Porky*

Sure thing I am.

*Steve*

(*Stops him with look—then speaks casually*) A gang shooting is no novelty in this burg. The cops will be glad he's out of the deck.

*Porky*

(*Summoning up his courage*) But, Steve; you done it, didn't you?

*Steve*

I don't know a thing about it. Me and the deceased was great friends. We'll spare no expense in giving him a swell funeral—flowers—all kinds; we'll make it the biggest event of all the season—a great success; and tell the boys I want 'em all to turn out for it.

*Porky*

Say, you talk like it was his wedding.

*Steve*

Not much different at that.

(*Knock on back door. Pause—STEVE gestures to PORKY. PORKY, fearful but obedient, peeks thru shutters*)

*Porky*

It's Dolph. (*He unbolts door and DOLPH slips in*) What's the matter?

*Steve*

I thought I sent you out for air.

*Dolph*

(*Pulls tabloids out from under coat*) The morning papers just came out.

*Steve*

Yeah?

*Dolph*

A lot of stuff about Scar Edwards' bump-off.  
(*They each take a paper*)

*Porky*

What's it say?

*Steve*

Let's see.

*Porky*

(*Reading*) Gang leader murdered. Story on  
Page 4.

*Steve*

Pictures and everything. Say, that's quick work, ain't it? Dan McCorn himself only knew it about two hours ago. Wonderful what they do nowadays. We should be very thankful for these modern inventions, boys—keeps us posted on the underworld.

*Dolph*

Believe me all that stuff ain't gonna be so good for somebody—all this talkin' and chewin' about it.

*Porky*

"Harlem Gang Leader's Body Found in Roaring Forties. Old Gang Feud Likely To Break Out."

*Steve*

Read to yourself—

*Dolph*

(*Tensely*) It says the cops have got some hot tips.

*Steve*

Sure they have. Here's the real dope though—Now listen—this is good, see. (*Reads*) "It is learned from confidential sources that the police suspect one of Edwards' own gang who is said to have nursed a grudge against his leader. An arrest is expected within 24 hours."

*Dolph*

What do you know about that— (*He takes the paper from Steve and reads as it trembles in his hands*)

*Steve*

Smart boys, them cops. Yes, sir. Porky, you want to be very careful how you conduct yourself in the future because them fellows don't let nothing get by.

*Dolph*

It says they suspect one of Scar's own crowd, huh?

*Steve*

That's what it says. Well, that's my theory. It's a good hunch, don't you think so, Dolph?

*Dolph*

(*Dumbfounded*) Sure.

*Porky*

But even if the cops don't bother us—they's something in that gang-war talk all right—

*Steve*

What do I care? I got you two boys to protect me.

*Dolph*

Listen, Steve, this ain't as sweet as it looks.

*Porky*

Dolph is right.

*Steve*

Oh, shut up. (*Quietly*) I certainly get a lot of coöperation out of you two. For the love of God pull yourselves together.

*Porky*

We're together.

*Steve*

Anybody'd think you was a couple of Staten Island hicks trying to find the Subways.

*Dolph*

Well, what's the matter? I was just tipping you what was going on—

*Porky*

He was just thinking about your safety, Steve. (*DOLPH crosses to door under stairs, peeks out*) Wish I knew who done it—I'm worried.

*Steve*

(*Steps toward PORKY*) Will you shut up or will I crown you with a gun butt?

*Porky*

I'm shut—(*STEVE strolls away*) But I'm worried just the same. What if the Edwards' outfit bump me off?

*Dolph*

Me too.

*Steve*

Well, what of it? You only have to die once. You got nothing to worry about—I'll bury you right—I may get a special professional rate from Campbell's if they get both of you. (*Laughs*) Say, quit worryin'. I wish they would start something. We'll go up to Harlem in a couple of fast cars and let these Chicago boys show off some of their machine gun stuff.

*Dolph*

No, Steve, on the dead, whyn't you go out of town till this blows over?

*Steve*

(*Sits*) I got something here that interests me.

*Porky*

Take her with you.

*Dolph*

I hate to see this chorus amitshure playing you for a sucker. Why don't you take her for a ride and then stop off at Little Ed's Roadhouse?

*Porky*

Sure; we might all get in trouble if you stay here.

*Steve*

Say, have you both lost all your sense? If I wanted to get myself accused of the murder of Scar Edwards, the surest way to do it would be to blow town. No, I'm staying here because I am innocent.

(*The cabaret doors open. The music swells to a finale with a crash of cymbals. There is applause, and the girls in Hawaiian costume, and Roy, enter. They go to the prop tables, in perfunctory fashion, and gather up their belongings. KATIE follows PEARL, hands her a note and stands waiting for an answer*)

That's intermission. You go out now and keep the visitors from coming back here, and don't be rubbering at McCorn—act unconcerned.

*Porky*

Sure.

*Steve*

You too, Dolph.

*Pearl*

(*As she finishes reading note*) Tell him I'll come as soon as I've changed.

(*PORKY and DOLPH go to cabaret*)

*Steve*

Billie, I've been waiting here for half an hour trying to get a word with you. (*MAZIE, seeing that STEVE wants to be alone with BILLIE, takes her props and costumes and goes upstairs and out with the others knowingly*) In fact ever since I was out in front looking at you and saw that something was missing. Didn't you like the bracelet?

*Billie*

Oh, of course I did—awfully—I thought it was lovely.

*Steve*

Then why don't you wear it?

*Billie*

Well—I—Mr. Crandall, I'll explain about it a little later when we've got time.

*Steve*

We've got time now. This is the intermission, isn't it?

*Billie*

Yes, but I—I mean—

*Steve*

(*Takes her hand*) No, really, I want to know. I'm proud of you, little fella—so I thought it would be nice for you to wear my bracelet—

*Billie*

I did wear it for a while.

*Steve*

If you don't like it, I'll take it back to Tiffany's and change it.

*Billie*

Oh, I'm just crazy about it.

*Steve*

Then why'd you take it off?

*Billie*

Well, Ruby began making some dirty cracks about it—and then I got wise to what it really meant—

*Steve*

What does it mean?

*Billie*

I guess you know.

*Steve*

No, tell me. I just thought it was a good looking bracelet and you were a good looking kid and the two of you looked awfully well together.

*Billie*

It's a slave bracelet, isn't it?

*Steve*

I guess that's what it's called.

*Billie*

That's what they said—and they said if a rich man gives you one and you wear it, then that's a sign that you belong to him.

*Steve*

(*Quietly*) I don't mind if they say that.

*Billie*

Well, I do.

*Steve*

(*More urgently*) You like me, don't you? I know you like me—I can tell—

*Billie*

Yes.

*Steve*

And I sure like you—and—I want to be able to do things for you and—

*Billie*

It isn't fair to you—that—I mean I can't take this bracelet off you because it wouldn't be fair.

*Steve*

Don't you think I'd treat you right?

*Billie*

I s'pose I shouldn't have let you take me out at all, Mr. Crandall, because I know it sounds silly, but I'm not that kind of a girl, that's all.

*Steve*

Maybe that's why I like you.

*Billie*

I know there's nothing wonderful about being the way I am—I mean being virtuous, I s'pose you call it—I know lots of the best-hearted girls in the world that aren't, so it isn't that; but I mean it isn't fair for me to keep your bracelet because that's the way I am.

*Steve*

Well, listen, baby, have I ever tried to pull any rough stuff?

*Billie*

No you haven't, and that's what I always say—

*Steve*

Then why haven't I got as much right to hang around you as some of these other yaps?

*Billie*

Well, you're married, of course and—

*Steve*

No, I'm not.

*Billie*

They said you was.

*Steve*

No, I'm divorced—I'm all right—I'm divorced twice. Just because you're here in the show, don't

think I regard you in a light way—no indeed—I'm no fly-by-night—I'm a very sincere sort of person, baby, and I want you to understand how I feel about you. I'm crazy about you. Honest, no foolin'. (*Draws her to him a little; Roy enters on stairs*) Don't listen to nobody but me, kiddie—cause I'll treat you right—

*Roy*

Mazie wants to see you right away, Billie.

*Billie*

Oh, does she—all right—excuse me.

(*She goes up and out. Roy summons up his courage and comes down stairs, trying to look unconcerned. STEVE stands grimly waiting for him.*)

*Steve*

Say, listen, actor [*Roy stops*] did anyone ever hit you right on the nose?

*Roy*

Yeh, once—come to think of it—twice. Why?

*Steve*

I was wondering if you'd like to have it happen again.

*Roy*

What did I ever do to you?

*Steve*

(*Recovering his calm*) Nothing—you couldn't. I was a sucker to get sore. Forget it. (*He exits to cabaret*)

(*MAZIE and BILLIE enter at top stairs*)

*Mazie*

Hey, Oilcan, what is this?

*Billie*

She never said she wanted me at all. You had no right to say that, Roy.

*Roy*

What I done was for the best—I had to get you out of hearing so I could chase that twenty-five-cent guy out of here.

*Mazie*

(*Coming down stairs*) Listen to what's yapping about twenty-five-cent guys.

*Roy*

He ain't a fit companion for Billie and from now on I'm making it my business to see that he don't have nothing to do with her.

*Mazie*

Where's your wings?

*Billie*

(*Following them*) Well, Roy, it seems to me you're taking an awful lot for granted without consulting anybody.

*Mazie*

And picked out an exciting job for himself too.

*Roy*

In the first place, you ain't going to stay to his party tonight.

*Mazie*

She certainly is.

*Roy*

It's no place for a nice girl like Billie.

*Mazie*

Oh, I see. But it's perfectly all right for me though, eh?

*Roy*

Well, maybe you know how to handle gorillas—you know your goolash, she don't.

*Mazie*

Billie'll be all right. Steve's a fine fellow and he's just out for some innocent fun—

*Roy*

Says you—

*Mazie*

Says I—

*Roy*

This staying up all night running wild, drinking poison, don't get you a thing—I'm no prude, I'm for light wines and beer—but if a girl wants to get ahead in this racket, she shouldn't start out her career partying with rough-necks. In the second place—you're going to give back that bracelet.

*Mazie*

Give it back—ha! ha! Now I'll tell one. Why she could get five hundred for it in hock. Listen, Small Time, this little novice has got a great chance to grab off a millionaire if she works her points. Are you going to stand around and try to gum it?

*Roy*

I certainly am.

*Mazie*

Then you ain't the gentleman I thought you was. He might marry her. Did you see that cracked ice? When Steve gives up like that, he's gone, hook, line and sinker.

*Roy*

Marry!

*Mazie*

I'm telling you—hand embroidered nightgowns and everything—

*Billie*

Now, if you're all done discussing me, perhaps I could say a word myself.

*Roy*

Well, if there's any thought of his trying to get away with that marriage stuff, it's time for me to do something definite.

*Mazie*

Sure it is—bow yourself out of the picture.

*Roy*

Is that the way you feel about it, Billie?

*Billie*

No.

*Roy*

All right. Then I'd like to speak to you about something very private. (*To Mazie*) Would you kindly leave us?

*Mazie*

Go to it. I got to get in some work on a sandwich anyhow. Don't believe a word he says, Billie.

(*Exit upstairs*)

*Billie*

(*Comes to him*) Roy, I wish you wouldn't keep acting that way.

*Roy*

What way is that?

*Billie*

Just going around arguing with everybody and making trouble.

*Roy*

I'm going to save you from getting into a lot of trouble.

*Billie*

I didn't ask you to.

*Roy*

I know you didn't. And take it from me, I ain't achin' to play the hero in this picture myself, but there's nothing else to do. Now first, I'm going to put a plain proposition to you. (*He comes toward her, half appealingly. She sits, looking up at him*) I guess you know pretty well that I'm very strong for you, but I ain't said nothing about matrimony on account of my old man has just recently died. But since this big four-flusher is talking about a wedding ring, I'll play my own ace. Listen, honey, how about getting hitched up?

*Billie*

(*Faintly*) Roy, I don't know.

*Roy*

It would be better for the act, wouldn't it?

*Billie*

I never thought much about it.

*Roy*

I s'pose I should of tipped you off how I felt before, but anyhow there it is in black and white.

*Billie*

(*Distressed*) Gee, I don't know what to say.

*Roy*

Take your time. I know it's kind of sudden. But I sort of thought you was wise to how I felt anyhow.

*Billie*

Well, I did think you liked me—I mean I hoped you liked me.

*Roy*

Well, now that you know how much I like you, what do you think about the idea?

*Billie*

(*Rise*) I don't know what to say.

*Roy*

I always thought, way down in our insides we knew we was for each other. God knows I'm for you, Billie girl, so just say the word that you're for me and I won't let out no yells or nothing, but I sure would feel just like doing that little thing.

(*She doesn't answer*) What do you say?

*Billie*

Well, Roy, of course I'd have to think a thing like this over and—

*Roy*

Nothing doing. Just as easy to say it now as some other time.

*Billie*

How can I say it, when I don't know for sure  
whether I'm in love with you or not?

*Roy*

Well, we certainly get on well together.

*Billie*

Oh, I know we do, just wonderful.

*Roy*

Well, when you see me coming to say hello to  
you in the morning, don't your heart never beat  
no faster?

*Billie*

Yes, it does.

*Roy*

Well, that's it. That's what they call love at  
first sight, kid. It's wonderful. I'm the same way.

*Billie*

But I don't know if we ought to talk about  
marrying when we're so poor—

*Roy*

(*He comprehends her reason for hesitating*) Oh,  
(*Turns away from her, hurt and tense*) you want  
a rich guy—

*Billie*

I didn't say that.

*Roy*

(*Contemptuously*) A gold digger.

*Billie*

I'm not. I'm not. But I don't want to be foolish and say something that I'll be sorry for afterwards. All I say is that I ought to think about a thing like this.

*Roy*

Aw, you want to think.

*Billie*

Yes.

*Roy*

All right, my duty's plain—Go on upstairs and think.

*Billie*

Well, don't talk to me that way or I never will marry you.

*Roy*

(*Dismissing her*) Sure. Talk it over with you next week. (*She bites her lip to keep back the tears and runs upstairs. Roy watches her until she's off, then goes to phone and drops a nickel in slot*) Hello—I want long distance. (*Gets returned nickel*) Long distance? I want to get Trenton, New Jersey. I want the Capitol Hotel there and I want to speak to one of the Maloney Brothers. No, not Baloney — Maloney — Maloney — M-a-l-o-n-e-y —

“M” as in matrimony. Yes, that’s right. Maloney—there’s two of them in the act and anyone of them will do. Make it snappy, girlie, will you, cause this is a very important call. How much will this set me back? What? Gee—well, all right. This is Roy Lane, Circle 5440—now do me a favor, sister, and put this call through right quick, will you, please?

*(During the latter part of his speech, BILLIE enters from dressing room and comes downstairs hesitatingly)*

*Billie*

*(Pleadingly)* Roy— *(Roy hangs up)*.

*Roy*

What do you want?

*Billie*

I ought to explain.

*Roy*

Now, listen, I told you where I stood. All you got to do is say yes or no.

*Billie*

First you ought to give me a chance to explain.

*Roy*

*(Comes closer)* Hey, you’ve got your make-up all streaked. You been crying.

*Billie*

Yes, I have.

*Roy*

One of the first things every artist should learn is, never cry during a performance.

*Billie*

I cried because of the way you talked to me.

*Roy*

Forget it, forget it. I'm wise now to how you feel—that's what I wanted to know. I got my duty, that's all.

*Billie*

But you don't know how I feel. You never gave me a chance—

*Roy*

I got the idea and just now I'm expecting a phone call, so—

*Billie*

You make me feel terrible. I don't want a rich man, but I know that it's just awful to be poor.

*Roy*

Well, tomorrow—

*Billie*

(*Almost in tears*) All my life everybody I've known has been poor and my mother always says, whatever you do, don't marry a poor fellow—

*Roy*

Well, for God's sake, haven't I told you what they get on the big time vaudeville and productions? (*Phone rings*) All right. Now get out of here, willya. This is a business call. (*She exits upstairs*. *Roy, at phone*) Hello—Yes, I'm trying to get Trenton. All right. (*Drops quarter in slot*) There you are, sister—Hello—hello—This one of the Maloney Brothers? Jack? Oh, Babe—Babe, this is Roy—How's the act going? Yeah. Got you opening the show, eh? Well, don't worry, Babe. I'll take a peek at it—I'll probably make some suggestions that will fix it O.K. That's duck soup for me, you know. What? Oh, nothing's wrong with me. Everything's O.K. But listen, Babe— (*Lights flash. Buzzer sounds. RUBY, GRACE and MAZIE in school girl costumes enter from dressing rooms, come down stairs talking*) Listen, can you hear me—I want you to do me a big favor—listen—Have you got a pencil? (*Continues talking—speaking low*)

*Ruby*

Sure, we'll have to stay for Steve's party. Who's yowling about it?

*Grace*

Oh, Billie.

(*GIRLS get school books and slates from prop table*)

*Ruby*

That one. Guess one party won't spoil her.

*Mazie*

How many did it take to spoil you?

*Ruby*

You ought to know—I saw you at the first.

(*They all wrangle at once*)

*Roy*

(*At phone—turns to them*) Hey, take it easy.

*Mazie*

Steve's passed you up like a white chip, ain't he, dearie?

*Ruby*

Say, want me to haul off and knock you down?

*Mazie*

If you do, I'll bounce up and separate your ideas from your habits.

*Grace*

There's the cue.

(*The three girls quickly form in line and exit to cabaret singing with baby voices, "M-i-s, s-i-s, s-i-p-p-i," etc.*)

*Roy*

(*At phone*) You're a life saver—do as much for you sometime, so long. (To PEARL who appears on stairs in Pirate costume) Want the phone?

*Pearl*

No, I gotta meet a John.

*Roy*

I got a John I'm going to meet pretty soon and bust him right square in the beak. (*Grabs hat and books*)

*Pearl*

Say, Roy.

*Roy*

Yeah?

*Pearl*

You been extra sweet to me since I been around here and let me tip you off to something. Don't monkey with the Crandall fellow. You might get hurt.

*Roy*

Him? I'll have him in Sing Sing before I get through. (*Runs to door to listen for cue, but finds he has plenty of time and comes back*) You know what I think he really is?

*Pearl*

What?

*Roy*

A bootlegger.

*Pearl*

(*With assumed surprise*) No? You don't say so. Wait and see. (*Exit to cabaret in posture of Professor, while girls' voices are heard singing "School Days"*)

(PEARL, *finding herself alone, goes to phone, looks in her purse for change, drops coin in slot. DAN enters from cabaret*)

*Dan*

Hello. (*She hangs up quickly—and turns, on her guard*) You got my note all right, did you?

*Pearl*

Sure.

*Dan*

Was you going to telephone?

*Pearl*

No, nothing important.

*Dan*

Positive?

*Pearl*

Didn't I tell you? (*Waits, then adds, impatient to be away from him*) I gotta get ready for my number in a minute.

(*Starts toward stairs*)

*Dan*

(*Stopping her*) I won't keep you long. (*She waits, her back to him*) Seen Scar Edwards lately?

*Pearl*

(Turns) What?

*Dan*

(Ignoring her bluff) Have you?

*Pearl*

What's the idea?

*Dan*

You know who I am?

*Pearl*

Sure, you're a cop.

*Dan*

Well I know who you are too. You're the girl I seen palling around with Scar Edwards when you were dancing up in the Golden Bowl.

*Pearl*

You never saw me.

*Dan*

(Turns her to face him) Oh—yes—I—did.  
Didn't I?

*Pearl*

Well, that's no crime, is it?

*Dan*

Not exactly. Why are you working down here?

*Pearl*

(Dropping bravado) You ain't going to give me away to Nick, are you?

*Dan*

Not a bit. What I'm asking you is for my own information, see?—it don't go any further. Are you on the outs with Scar?

*Pearl*

No, and if it's all the same, would you mind calling him Jim?

*Dan*

Excuse me. (*Looks at her steadily*) You're keeping tabs on this bunch for Scar?—I mean Jim—is that right?

*Pearl*

(*Appeals to him*) He didn't want to put somebody down here he couldn't absolutely trust for fear they'd double cross him—a lot of dirty skunks, they wouldn't stop at nothing.

*Dan*

But Jim Edwards trusts you, eh?

*Pearl*

Sure (*With a sudden burst of confidence*)—we're gonna be married as soon as he gets his final papers.

*Dan*

(*Walking away*) That's too bad.

*Pearl*

What is? (*Pause*) Has he done something you want him for?

*Dan*

No, I haven't a thing on him, lady.

*Pearl*

Well, tell me straight—has something happened?  
You act so kind of funny.

*Dan*

You gotta finish this show tonight? Sing and  
everything?

*Pearl*

Sure, I go on again.

*Dan*

Well, I won't take up any more of your time then,  
—I just wanted to know if you'd seen Edwards to-  
night.

*Pearl*

No, I ain't seen him since breakfast, but—(*Again decides to trust him*) I don't know why I shouldn't tell you—he told me he was coming down here to-night to have a show-down with Steve.

*Dan*

Oh, oh, he told you. . . . Well, I'll be going along about my business—Thanks, Mrs. Edwards.

*Pearl*

(*Pleased*) In three weeks.

*Dan*

You just keep this under your hat, won't you?

*Pearl*

Will I? If I want to get out of here with all my neck, I will.

(*Roy and three girls come dancing in singing "Hie, oh, the merry oh"*)

*Dan*

Pleased to have met you.

(*Strolls out cabaret arch, then turns to his left and goes down hall. PEARL is puzzled—depressed—tries to shake off her fear—walks to stairs and exits. Roy grabs up a prop*)

*Roy*

After this, a little more room, girls, when I make that side kick.

*Grace*

All right.

*Ruby*

In your hat (*Roy exits to cabaret, dancing; the girls start upstairs*) Which one of you tarts got on my slipper?

*Mazie*

These must be yours, dearie, they're miles too big for me.

(*GIRLS go upstairs to dressing room. NICK and PORKY enter from hall*)

*Porky*

I can't look at that hoofer no longer—a different suit but the same old dance.

(*BILLIE comes down stairs with telegraph blank and goes left*)

*Nick*

It's the best I can do for the money (*To Billie*)  
Where you going?

*Billie*

I'll be back in time for my number.

*Nick*

That ain't what I asked you.

*Billie*

(*At cabaret door*) I want to give this telegram to the doorman to send my mother. If I'm going to stay to the party, I have to tell her.

(*NICK gestures to go ahead. SHE exits up hall*)

*Porky*

Is that the one that Steve is nuts about?

*Nick*

(*Shrugs*) Yeh, I don't know why—but that's it. He says she's got best looking legs in New York——

(*LIL enters on stairs*)

*Porky*

Legs ain't all one size—some is lean—some is fat.

*Lil*

(*At foot of steps*) And how do you like 'em, Mr. Thompson?

(*PORKY is embarrassed—NICK exits to office*)

*Porky*

Me? If a woman's got sense, I never see her legs.

*Lil*

Ain't you a comfort. (*She puts mirror and make-up on piano*)

*Porky*

Well, my friends say they liked your act very well.

*Lil*

Yeah? Did you like it?

*Porky*

Sure I did. Didn't you see me out there?

*Lil*

Yeah—but I was a little bit discouraged when I looked down and seen you was asleep.

*Porky*

What? Oh, my God, lady—no. No, that's the way I get—you know—carried away—I shut my eyes when I'm terribly interested.

*Lil*

I guess you didn't shut your eyes when the weanies was out there.

*Porky*

No. I wasn't interested. They wasn't nothing worth listenin' to, so the least I could do was to look at 'em. But your singin' was—well, I can't express it—it's like I says to a friend of mine sittin' next to me—I says, "I consider that she's got one of the finest voices of her sex," I says.

*Lil*

Well, I'm generally in key.

*Porky*

Sure you are, and that's more than a lot of these opera singers can say too. Listen, I want you to tell me how you do that singin' some time—a long personal talk if you know what I mean. You're stayin' to Steve's party tonight, ain't you?

*Lil*

(*Smiles*) I will if you do.

*Porky*

Sure.

*Lil*

Only don't ask me to sing, cause I don't know a single dirty song—that is, not dirty enough for that bunch.

*Porky*

This ain't no singing party. That bunch all lost their voices asking for bail.

(*Buzzer*)

*Lil*

(*Starts out*) Well, there goes the whistle. I gotta step out now and hit a couple of high ones.

(*ROY enters from cabaret*)

*Porky*

I'm coming too.

*Lil*

Sit where I can see you.

*Porky*

Sure—I'll be right at your feet.

(*LIL exits to cabaret, PORKY hurries down the hall*)

(*ROY stands looking after them. BILLIE enters from hall. He turns away from her, goes to prop table and begins to undress. BILLIE starts upstairs, expecting him to speak, but when he doesn't, she pauses*)

*Billie*

All I've got to say is, if you always treated me like you have tonight, you'd make a terrible husband.

*Roy*

Oh, that's all you got to say, huh?

*Billie*

I should think that would be enough.

*Roy*

Not for me. (*She starts up*) Come here a minute!

*Billie*

If you have anything to say, you know where to find me.

*Roy*

I gotta make a quick change, you know that.

*Billie*

(*Comes to him*) What is it?

*Roy*

Was you out there taking a drink?

*Billie*

No.

*Roy*

I'm glad to hear that anyways.

*Billie*

I was sending a telegram to my mother.

*Roy*

(*Startled*) What?

*Billie*

You tried to boss me so much I just thought I'd find out if I had a mind of my own. So I just went

and telegraphed that I wouldn't be home tonight cause I'm going to the party.

*Roy*

Well, I'm sorry you done that. (*Takes off trousers*) Listen to me, kiddie, if it's just to spite me you're doing this, why, I'll eat mud.

*Billie*

It's not only that—it's because I have an obligation.

*Roy*

(*Throws trousers over arm and goes to her*) Listen, partner, I've been your pal anyhow, and I got some right to talk to you. Who have you got the greatest obligation to in this world, huh—a big rounder like Steve Crandall, who's got no respect for pure womanhood, or your poor old gray-haired mother who's sitting at home alone waiting for you?

*Billie*

But she's not alone—my sister's with her.

*Roy*

Oh. (*In disgust he throws his trousers in corner and picks up others*)

*Billie*

If you don't think I got enough character to be decent at a party, you better look for somebody you got confidence in.

(*PORKY enters from hall*)

*Porky*

Your shirt-tail's hanging out.

(*Exit to office*)

*Roy*

(*Paying no attention to him*) That ain't the life for you. (*Getting on trousers while he pleads earnestly*) You don't want to be pegged with them bags, do you? They think they're wiser than Almighty God, the guy that wrote the book,—but when they're hittin' the home stretch for Potter's Field, they'll be wiser still. For God's sake, think of all the plans we made, Billie. Don't be a dumb-bell.

*Billie*

I'm not.

*Roy*

You're giving a good imitation of one.

*Billie*

I'd go if for nothing else, just to show you good and proper that I don't belong to you.

*Roy*

If you did, I'd spank your bottom.

*Billie*

Oh, you would—would you?

*Roy*

You bet I would—and if I catch you inhaling any of that poison, I'll spank you before the whole mob.

*Billie*

Then I would be finished with you.

*Roy*

I don't care if you never spoke to me again. I gotta do my duty by my partner—first the artist, that's me—second, the human bein'. (*Buzzer*) I done everything I could to appeal to your better instincts. I pulled every wire I knowed to keep you decent and we ain't heard from all the precincts yet. (*Tries out comedy hat*) I told you just what my feelings for you is, nothing up the sleeve so far as I'm concerned, so if you want to be sore, I guess that's how it'll have to be, that's all.

(*Dances into cabaret in comic position*)

(*PORKY comes in from office—stops a second in door, talking into office*)

*Porky*

Sure you're right, sure you are. (*PORKY sees BILLIE who has started upstairs, shuts door and crosses to middle of the room*) Say, little girl, did you see . . . ? (*The party doors open and DAN appears*) Ah, yeah—well, never mind, I'll talk to you about it some other time.

(*BILLIE looks over railing to see who it is, then exits*)

*Porky*

Well, hello Dan. What you doin' in here? I thought you was out with one of the frails.

*Dan*

(Coming down) I'm broadminded. I go in for everything. Got a light?

*Porky*

(Lights match) Sure. (PORKY's hand shakes)

*Dan*

What are you shaking about?

*Porky*

I'm not shaking.

*Dan*

(Laughs) Sure you are. Look. (He holds PORKY's wrist)

*Porky*

That's the way I always get.

*Dan*

When a cop's around?

*Porky*

No, when I'm in love.

(DOLPH enters from hall. Stops alarmed at seeing PORKY and DAN together—then hurries back down hall)

*Dan*

Ever been accused of murder?

*Porky*

(*Inarticulate with fear*) Me? Listen, Dan, don't get me wrong—that stuff ain't in my line.

*Dan*

Oh, no, no—I didn't mean that—I was thinking about a fella I knew—it's tough, that's all—it's tough.

*Porky*

Oh, very tough.

*Dan*

This fella would a been all right if he'd told what he knew in the first place—but he tried to hold out.

*Porky*

Oh, gee, what a mistake—always come clean, that's me—always come clean.

*Dan*

He was mixed up with kind of a sour crowd and—

*Porky*

That's another thing: bad company; that's something we all should avoid. Eh, Dan, ain't I right? Listen, Dan, I didn't have nothing to do with this thing—I—

(*STEVE strides down hall, followed by DOLPH who hovers in the background*)

*Steve*

What the hell you trying to do, Mac, crab my party?

*Dan*

No, I'm waiting for someone who saw Scar Edwards when he was here.

*Steve*

Well, we've all told you he wasn't here?

*Dan*

You might be mistaken.

*Steve*

No one around here has got any reason for holding out on you. If I saw him, I'd say so—why not?

*Dan*

You might forget.

*Steve*

Bushwah.

*Porky*

I think some of his own crowd done it that got jealous.

*Dan*

I figger different. You see he didn't have a gun on him, and he was shot in the back, which looks to me like he come peaceful to have a showdown—and just for that one reason he didn't carry his cannon.

*Porky*

Well, I said once—and I'm willin' to repeat it—I didn't know him.

*Dan*

(*Sharply*) How do you know you didn't see him since you don't know him?

*Porky*

Well—I—there wasn't anyone here when I came in.

*Dan*

(*Slowly*) No one?

*Steve*

(*Cutting in quickly, but keeping his manner deliberate*) Well, I was—but I was in the office.

*Dan*

(*Without looking around*) Oh, and you were where, Dolph?

*Dolph*

I was out riding with a couple of janes—and if you want me to bring 'em into court and tell about it, I'll be glad to oblige you. (*Innocently*) Why? What's happened?

*Dan*

No matter what it is, you got your alibi all fixed now, eh?

*Dolph*

(*Advancing*) What do you mean?

*Steve*

(*Pulling him back*) Dan don't mean a thing, Dolph. Treat him civil even if he is a dick.

*Dan*

When did you get here tonight, Dolph?

*Dolph*

Early, then I left Steve here and went out for the ride.

*Dan*

You left Steve alone?

*Steve*

No, Porky was here.

*Dan*

(*To Dolph*) When you left?

*Dolph*

No, I was—

*Porky*

I was just coming in when he was going out.

*Dan*

(*Slowly*) Oh, now I got it—Steve was here when Porky comes in, but Porky didn't see him cause Steve was in the office— (*To PORKY*) Well, how did you know Steve was in the office if you didn't see him?

*Porky*

Why—

*Steve*

(*Stepping toward DAN belligerently*) He could hear me talking—the door was open. Say, for Christ's sake, Dan, you been all over this once. Now, listen, if you think any of us here had anything to do with it, why go ahead and make the pinch; let's get some bail fixed and get it over with. But for God's sake, don't stand around here and make a coroner's inquest out of the place. I got a party on here tonight.

*Dan*

Well, now listen, sweetheart, why get excited? You know it's my business to ask questions, ain't it? I know you guys didn't have anything to do with it, but I got to make a report and I'm workin' at this from a couple of angles.

*Porky*

Sure, Dan—that's right.

*Dan*

Trouble with you, Steve, is that you've had so much business with a lot of half-baked federal dicks you ain't used to talking to just a plain old New York cop any more.

*Steve*

(*Placated*) Well, maybe you're right.

*Dan*

I ain't always—I been wrong lots of times, but this case of Edwards interests me terribly. You see, whether a guy shoots square or not, according to the law, ain't always it—but no matter what he's done, to me, he should have a break; and somebody shot this guy in the back. (*Starts out*)

(BENNIE, *a thug in a dress suit, enters from hall*)

*Bennie*

Hey, fellows— (*DAN looks him over*)

*Dan*

Well, Bennie, you're out in Chicago now, eh?

*Bennie*

Huh? What's the idea? (*DAN exits down hall*)

*Dolph*

(*Between his teeth, going to hall door*) The son of a bitch.

*Bennie*

Who's that guy?

*Porky*

Dan McCorn.

*Steve*

What you doing back here, Bennie? We ain't ready for you yet.

*Bennie*

The boys want to be with the lingerie. (*Buzzer*)

The nerve of that big stiff looking at me that way!

(*GIRLS start coming down stairs, dressed in Pirate costumes — GRACE crosses to piano, then PEARL, then RUBY and MAZIE, BILLIE and ANN*)

What's the idea anyhow?

*Steve*

Nothing that concerns you, Bennie.

*Ruby*

Ready, Pearl?

*Pearl*

Sure, I'm ready.

*Steve*

A local nuisance by the name of Scar Edwards got bumped off tonight, that's all.

(*PEARL at the mention of Scar halts her descent. As the sentence is finished, she gives a scream, loses her grip on the stair rail and falls down the steps in a faint*)

*Grace*

What—what's the matter? My God.

*Mazie*

(*Hurrying to her*) Pearl.

*Steve*

What happened?

*Ruby*

What to hell happened—

*Ann*

What happened; what's the matter?

*Billie*

Pearl! But, dearie, you must of—

*Pearl*

I'm all right.

*Mazie*

What is it, Pearl?

*Pearl*

(*Trys to push them away*) I tell you I'm all right.

*Mazie*

Gee Christmas, kid—

*Steve*

What'd you do?

*Pearl*

I tripped on the stairs. That's all.

*Ruby*

I thought you fainted.

*Pearl*

Fainted? For what? Twisted my ankle, that's all.

(BILLIE *helps* PEARL)

*Steve*

Sure you're all right?

*Pearl*

Sure I am.

*Mazie*

(*Waving him away*) She'll be all right.

*Steve*

(*Turns back, dismissing the incident*) All right, Bennie, bring your bunch back—pretty near time anyhow—Go ahead, Dolph.

(*Exit DOLPH and BENNIE to hall*)

Come on, girls. I want to buy you a drink. What say?

*Mazie*

We can't now, Steve. We're on for this flash you know.

*Steve*

Well, I'll have a flock of them waiting for you as soon as you come off. All ready for a big night?

*Mazie*

Try us.

*Steve*

I'm going to. Now here you are, girls—see these \$100 certificates? Well, you each get one of them.

(*PEARL sits at back, her head down; BILLIE stands aloof; the others crowd around*)

*Girls*

One for each?

*Grace*

Atta boy.

*Mazie*

You tell 'em.

*Ann*

Me for you.

*Ruby*

Go to it.

*Steve*

Wait a minute—this is the way we do it—I'll tear 'em in half and give each one of you your bit—now if you're all good babies, when the party is over, I'll tack the other half on. Fair?

*(He tears the bills in half and starts passing one part to each of the girls)*

*Mazie*

Sure it's fair.

*Grace*

Three cheers for Steve.

*Ann*

This sure looks like a good start.

*Ruby*

Everything is hotzy-totzy.

*Steve*

Just be yourselves with these friends of mine and the sky's the limit. This party will be nobody's

business. Here, Pearl, if you make good you get the other half—

*Pearl*

Don't worry! I'll make good.

*Steve*

Atta baby. Here, Billie. (*BILLIE won't take hers*—STEVE laughs) I'll keep it for you.

(*Roy enters from cabaret*)

*Roy*

Come on, girls, give 'em your best. This is a short one. I just got a flash at a guy standin' in the back that I thought was Al Jolson.

*Girls*

(*Excited*) Oh!

*Roy*

On your toes—alley op.

(*They put daggers in mouths and slink into cabaret to sneaky music*)

*Porky*

(*Crossing to Steve*) Did I say the right things?

*Steve*

What do you mean?

*Porky*

To Dan McCorn!

*Steve*

Sure, don't worry about him. Forget it——

*Porky*

I do, but——

(JOE opens doors of party room. It is now brightly lighted—the table set—the waiters hurrying about making final preparations)

*Steve*

(Calling to party room) Joe, fix up some high-balls and make mine a strong one.

(BENNIE and DOLPH come in from hall with Chicago mob. PORKY does comedy lock-step. BENNIE kicks PORKY in fun)

Come on in, boys—what do you think of it, huh?

*Mike*

Class, all right.

*Steve*

Nothing like this in the loop.

*Larry*

This is get-together week in old Manhattan.

*Bennie*

The place you got to go through to get to Chicago.

*Dolph*

Wait till you're here awhile.

*Bennie*

It looks like a big night.

*Larry*

How long before we meet the dames?

*Steve*

They'll be here in a minute. (*Cheers*) Now remember, boys, no shop-talk to-night—everybody here don't know our racket.

*Dolph*

Steve, you better be the one to serve out the introductions.

*Porky*

And don't let anyone sing the prisoner's song or we'll all be in tears.

(*They laugh*)

*Dolph*

Here they come, come on boys, step up, don't be bashful.

(*GIRLS come rushing in from cabaret*)

*Steve*

Here we are—now how about the drinks?

*Mazie*

Not yet, Steve, this is the quick change for the finale.

*Ruby*

The parade of the nations.

*Dolph*

Step up, fellows. Don't be bashful.

(*The CHICAGO MOB get an eye-full. GIRLS  
keep right on with their change. They now  
change to Flag Costume*)

*Steve*

Let me present you, fellas. Boys, this is Miss Billie Moore—and this is Mazie.

*Mazie*

Just Mazie? I got another name.

*Steve*

Excuse me—Miss Mazie Smyth.

*Mazie*

Smith—ordinary Smith.

*Steve*

Excuse me again—common ordinary Smith.

*Mazie*

Ordinary, but not common.

(*All laugh*)

*Steve*

And here's Ruby—Pearl—Grace.

(*To ANN*)

What's your name, Baby?

*Ann*

(*Weakly*) Ann.

(*All laugh*)

*Steve*

Sure—Ann it be.

*Larry*

Glad to be wid youse.

*Steve*

Girls, my friends from Chicago.

*Ruby*

My Gawd, from way out there in Montana?

*Larry*

Illinois.

*Porky*

She's kiddin'.

(NICK enters from office)

*Steve*

And here's the old chief himself. Boys, this is Nick Verdis, a regular—he's paid so many fines, he owns stock in the White House.

*Larry*

Glad to get in wid youse.

*Bennie*

Ya got some swell frills—yes, sir.

*Dolph*

I could use one right now.

*Larry*

Split one with you.

*Duke*

(*Shaking hands with Nick*) I heard of you, fella.

*Nick*

Any friends of Steve's is K. O. with me. Come on in here, and we can sit down.

(*Some of the men mingle with the girls and begin to get intimate*)

*Bennie*

Sit down and leave all this lingerie, am I crazy?

*Steve*

They got to finish the show yet—we'll see 'em all afterwards.

*Mazie*

(*Getting position*) Well, I hope to tell you.

*Dolph*

Me for you.

*Mazie*

Be generous—your friends may like me.

*Roy*

(*Rushes in from cabaret out of breath*) Ready to unravel the last one, kids?

(*The girls start parading out four steps apart, very regally*)

*Steve*

And, fellows, this is Roy Lane, better known as Personality—

*Roy*

(*Making change to Uncle Sam costume*) In person—not a moving picture.

*Steve*

Possibly the greatest living song and dance artist who never played the Palace.

(CROWD *laugh*)

*Roy*

There's a lot of time, Wisenheimer. I ain't worryin' about my future.

(*He follows girls into cabaret*)

*Nick*

Don't get him started now.

*Steve*

He's a character. I'm going to have him stay for a little while. He'll hand you a million laughs——

*Nick*

Come on, Chicagoes, I'll buy the first one.

(*NICK leads way to party room*)

*Larry*

We ain't exactly what you call broke ourselves, you know.

(*They all laugh and start drinking. LIL enters from cabaret*)

*Porky*

Wait a minute, gang. Here's one you ain't met yet. This is Lil, the silver toned song bird——

*Lil*

(*Kidding*) Give the little girl a big hand.

*Porky*

Maybe we can get her to wobble something——

*Dolph*

How about silver treads amongst the gold.

*Bennie*

Nix—Nix——

*Porky*

One of these guys knows you, Lil—says he heard you sing at Jim Tomasso's joint in Chicago seven years ago.

*Bennie*

(*Yells*) I said seventeen years ago.

*Lil*

What do you mean? That was my mother.

(*Everyone laughs. DOLPH hands LIL a drink.*

*The CHICAGO MOB kid PORKY and STEVE ad lib while drinking and eating. The GIRLS and Roy enter from cabaret. There is substantial applause)*

*Mazie*

Well, that's over.

*Grace*

Now for the big feed.

*Ruby*

And, my Gawd, how I could use a drink!

*Mazie*

One of them guys is kinda good lookin'.

*Ruby*

What great eyesight you got.

*Ann*

She saw his pocketbook.

*Mazie*

Oh, you're waking up too.

*Dolph*

(*Steps out*) Come on, girls—let's have fun. In here everybody—— (PEARL sits down overcome for the moment. ROY has started upstairs carrying his costumes and props) Hey, young fellow, have a drink.

*Roy*

No, thanks, I just had my hair cut.

(*He exits upstairs—the piano in party room is heard*)

*Nick*

(*To PEARL*) What's the matter with you?

*Pearl*

(*Recovering herself—tough*) I'm waiting for someone to bring me a drink.

(*BENNIE and LARRY rush for PEARL*)

*Larry*

I saw you first, redhead.

(*Carries her into room*)

*Porky*

This way, everybody—— We'll get Lil to sing.

(*General hilarity*)

*Nick*

(*Switches off lights*) Not so much noise——

(*He exits to hall. BENNIE chases BILLIE from party room*)

*Bennie*

Come on, jazz it up, blue eyes.

(*BILLIE frightened, runs toward STEVE. STEVE grabs BENNIE toughly and throws him back into party room*)

*Steve*

Get to hell in there——

(*DOLPH closes the party room doors, leaving BILLIE alone with STEVE. We hear the piano dimly. BILLIE rushes to STEVE for protection*)

*Steve*

It's all right, Billie, don't be scared. Everything's all right.

*Billie*

Oh, Steve, what'll I do?

*Steve*

(*Holding her*) I won't let anybody bother you—— (*He looks at her tenderly—is suddenly overcome by his passion*) I love you—kid. (*Crushes her to him*) God, I love you. I'd do murder for you.

(*He kisses her passionately— She tries to break away*)

*Billie*

(*Frees herself and goes to chair*) Steve, please don't.

*Steve*

All right—I'm sorry. (*Kneels beside her—contrite*) Listen, Billie, just to show you that I appreciate what a real nice girl you are, you don't need to stay to the party. You can go home if you'd be happier about it.

*Billie*

No, I ought to stay because I owe that much to you, and anyhow—— (*Looking upstairs after Roy*) I said I'd stay and I'm going to.

*Steve*

But you're such a little peach I want to make you happy—see. Listen, tomorrow night after the show let's get in the car—go for a ride and have a good talk. Will you? (*Nods*) All right, that's a date. We'll stop at Ed's place and get a nice little supper and I've got something important to tell you.

(*He starts to fondle her*)

*Billie*

Make your hands behave, Steve.

*Steve*

(*Drawing back*) All right, I'm just as meek as a lamb, see! Whatever you say.

(*The party room door opens and MAZIE chases RUBY out—others follow with great clamor*)

*Mazie*

I'll make your shirt roll up your back like a window shade.

*Ruby*

(*Drunk*) I'll step on you. I'll spit in your eye—

*Dolph*

Cut it out— (*Separates them*)

(*NICK enters from cabaret*)

*Nick*

Hey, hey. Quiet. Quiet. Shut up that noise.

*Mazie*

No phoney blond with store teeth can pull that on me and live.

*Nick*

Shut it. Shut it. Take 'em back.

*Steve*

All right. I'll handle this.

*Lil*

(*To Porky*) Andrew, dance for mama.

(*Porky dances Charleston. Fight breaks up, as couples begin to dance*)

*Steve*

Inside. It's all right, Nick. I'll pay for the noise too, so keep your shirt on.

*Grace*

Where's my boy friend?

*Nick*

(*To Steve*) McCorn is sitting just outside there.

(*Steve herds them back*)

*Steve*

Listen, folks, the party is on the inside. Nobody is to come out here without a permit from the Chief—that's me.

(*Ann leaps at Steve winding her legs and arms about him; he carries her into party room*)

B R O A D W A Y

---

*Ann*

Hail the chief.

(*Cheer from Party. JOE enters from cabaret with more drinks*)

*Joe*

I never seen such a thirsty gang.

*Steve*

Excuse me a minute, Billie.

(*He shuts door to party room leaving only the two girls and NICK outside*)

*Nick*

(*Going*) What do they think this is, Ike Blooms?

(*Exit to hall*)

*Mazie*

(*Going to BILLIE*) Ain't you having a good time?

*Billie*

I'm all right.

*Mazie*

Come on, have some fun—you're only going to live once.

*Billie*

You go ahead—don't pay any attention to me.

*Mazie*

Don't be afraid. Nothing'll happen to you. Listen, Billie, crack wise. It ain't so serious. Just kid 'em along, that's all, kid 'em along. It ain't so bad

as it looks. I wouldn't give you a bum steer, kid, honest, I wouldn't—but you don't always want to pay too much attention to what people say. Take me, for instance, you think I'm a pretty tough character—sure I am, in a way,— but I seldom give up—very seldom——

(KATIE enters from hall)

*Katie*

Say, Miss Moore, here's a telegram for you.

*Billie*

(Taking it) Me?

*Katie*

The hostess told me to bring it in.

*Billie*

Thanks.

*Katie*

'Sall right.

(Exit to cabaret)

*Billie*

(To MAZIE) Gee whiz, I'm scared of telegrams.  
Ain't it crazy?

*Mazie*

Once I got an offer of a job that way.

*Billie*

Yeah? .

*Mazie*

Sure. And it can't talk so you gotta read it.  
(BILLIE tears it open—reads—looks at MAZIE terrified) What's the matter, kid? It ain't bad news?  
(BILLIE nods, bites her lip and begins to weep)  
What is it?

*Billie*

(Passes her the wire, trying not to sob) It's  
mamma.

*Mazie*

(Reads) Mother very low—come at once. Mary.

*Billie*

(Rises) Oh Mazie, and to think I'm acting like  
this and she's maybe dying.

*Mazie*

Now, Billie, maybe it ain't nothing at all—now  
you get hold of yourself, Billie. (Roy enters on  
stairs in street clothes) Roy, Billie's got some bad  
news.

*Roy*

What is it?

*Mazie*

Her mother.

*Billie*

(Going to him impulsively) Oh, Roy—she must  
of had a stroke or something. She was all right last  
week—a telegram from Mary—maybe she's dying.  
Oh, dear, oh how could I have acted this way.

*Mazie*

You didn't do anything, darling.

(*Pulls BILLIE from Roy and puts her arms about her*)

*Roy*

(*Pulls her right back into his arms*) It's all right, kid. Everything's all right now. You're among friends. We'll take care of you. (*She weeps more uncontrollably*) There. There.

*Mazie*

Gee, I can't stand seein' her like that.

*Roy*

It'll come out all right. Take it from me. Everything's goin' to be all right, Billie.

*Billie*

I want to go home.

*Roy*

Of course you do, and I'm right here to take you, too, honey. The sooner the better, so stop your crying now. Just leave it to me. Come on, let's get out of here fast.

*Billie*

You're so good to me.

*Roy*

You bet I'm good to you. Why wouldn't I be? Ain't we pals through thick and thin, that's us, kid.

Now you hurry and jump into your traps, honey, and we'll be on the train for Trenton in twenty-five minutes.

(STEVE *enters from party room. Inside they are singing and dancing*)

*Mazie*

Oh, Steve, Billie's got to go home—her mother's sick.

(*Hands him wire*)

*Billie*

(To STEVE) I'm awfully sorry. Mazie, have you got a handkerchief?

(MAZIE *shakes her head, calling attention to her undress. Roy dries her eyes with his*)

*Steve*

Well, that's tough luck but we'll see what we can do. To hell with the party. I gotta get you home. Hurry up now, the car's out back. I'll have you out there in no time.

(KATIE *enters from hall*)

*Roy*

You don't need to bother, Mr. Crandall, everything is already arranged, see?

*Katie*

Here's another one, Miss Moore.

*Billie*

What?

(*STEVE takes it and opens it*)

*Katie*

Almost like an opening night, or something.

(*Exits to cabaret*)

*Steve*

(*Reads to himself, then grunts*) Huh.

*Billie*

What's it say? She's not—?

*Steve*

(*Reads*) Your wire received. Stay to party and have good time. Mother.

(*They all look at each other*)

*Roy*

She must a got better.

*Mazie*

Ain't that peculiar?

*Billie*

I don't see.

*Roy*

Sometimes those things gets mixed.

*Mazie*

I'll say they do.

*Steve*

Well, everything's all right anyhow, isn't it? See?  
All that worry for nothing. So dry up those tears  
and powder the little nose and join the bunch.

*Roy*

I think as long as we planned to go, Billie, the  
best thing would be to start out now and see for  
sure if everything's all right. I'll take you home.

*(He pulls her by one arm, STEVE holds her by  
the other)*

*Steve*

Of course she ain't going home.

*Roy*

It seems to me, it's the wisest thing to do.

*Steve*

*(Takes her with him)* No, she's going to stay.  
Come along, Billie. You come on too, Lane. Do  
your clowning.

*Roy*

I'm particular what kind of society I'm seen with.

*Steve*

Wait a minute.

*(NICK enters hall)*

*Roy*

I don't know as I will.

*Steve*

What do you mean?

*Roy*

I mean Billie ought to get out of here—and as for me, I wouldn't stay and entertain your gang of goofers if you kissed my foot in Macy's window at high noon.

*Steve*

Why, you dancing tramp.

*Roy*

I know all about you. It's guys like you give New York a bad name.

*Steve*

You waxed floor bum.

*Nick*

Steve, easy. You want people out there to hear?

*Steve*

(Controlling himself) Tell him to get.

*Nick*

Get!

*Mazie*

(Grabs STEVE, looking at telegrams) Say, I just thought of something. This last wire is an answer to Billie's. Now, the other one is an answer to something else. I'll bet my winter underwear the boy-scout framed it himself.

*Roy*

You're full of chestnuts.

*Steve*

What?

*Nick*

Framed what?

*Mazie*

He was telephoning long distance. Billie, you told me yourself.

*Roy*

Maloney Bros., that's all.

(DOLPH opens the party doors looking for STEVE; he senses something wrong and waits —others join him)

*Mazie*

He got the Maloney Brothers to send the wire.

*Billie*

Roy, you didn't?

*Roy*

Certainly I didn't.

*Mazie*

You certainly did.

*Steve*

So you framed a wire on her? That's the kind of tricks you're up to, eh?

*Billie*

Roy, you wouldn't scare me like that——

*Roy*

Don't pay any attention to any of 'em. (*Waving*) Anything I done, I guess I'd know if I done it.

*Billie*

(*Seeing the truth in his eyes*) You did. (*Wounded beyond expression*) That's the dirtiest trick anybody could ever do. Oh, Roy, making me think—

(*Turns away*)

*Roy*

Now, Billie, listen—

*Billie*

I don't want to listen—I don't want anything to do with you— You big sap.

*Roy*

(*Almost ready to cry*) Suppose I did do it. I did it for you, didn't I? I know these kind of guys and you can't be right if you run with guys like Steve Crandall—he's just out to grab you—and he don't care what means he uses—I'm tellin' you he's just plain no good and I don't give a damn who knows it.

(*There is a growl from the men. They move toward Roy threateningly, but STEVE stops them*)

*Dolph*

Hey, wait a minute.

*Porky*

What'll we do to him?

*Ruby*

What do you think of that?

*Mazie*

You're going fine——

*Grace*

Look who's here.

(STEVE gives PORKY a quick instruction and stands waiting for the girls to be taken out)

*Nick*

No more. Nobody. Get back in the room.  
There's still peoples out there.

*Porky*

(Downstage) Come on, girls, I want to tell you a bed-time story. Come on now. All the girls in with me. Come on, Billie.

(Exits with girls and PORKY to party room—  
he shuts doors)

*Steve*

Now, you louzy little bum, I got you where I want you.

(Hits him and knocks him down)

*Roy*

Thanks. (Getting up) Ain't you a brave guy though—all right—look out for this one.

(Roy rushes at STEVE. STEVE pulls his gun)

*Steve*

And look out for this one.

*Dolph*

Don't shoot. They'll hear you.

*Joe*

Cheese it.

*Dolph*

Look out, the dick.

(DOLPH grabs his arm, twisting his wrist. In the struggle the gun is dropped. Before it can be recovered, they become aware that DAN McCORN has come in from cabaret. They are frozen into quiet. ROY picks up the pistol defensively, without realizing that he has it)

*Dan*

What's the matter, boys?

*Steve*

Little argument, that's all.

*Dan*

Little argument? (Goes to ROY) So little you pull this?

(Snatches gun from ROY)

*Roy*

That ain't mine.

*Dan*

No? Whose is it then?

*Steve*

It's his all right—he pulled it on me just now.

*Roy*

You big liar.

*Nick*

Liar yourself, Lane. We all saw you do it.

(*NICK closes cabaret doors—JOE stands guard at party doors*)

*Gang*

Yes! sure!—we saw him.

*Dan*

(*To Roy*) You got a permit to carry this?

*Roy*

No, of course not——

*Dan*

Oh you're the boy that——

*Roy*

I'm the chief performer here, Mister, Roy Lane.

*Dan*

Oh, yes.

*Roy*

Singing and dancing specialties; this is just a  
filler-in.

*Dan*

Ever hear of the Sullivan Act?

*Roy*

What time is it playing?

*Dan*

The Sullivan Act is a law—it gives you plenty of time for carrying one of these.

*Larry*

You said it!

(*The gang laughs*)

*Roy*

I tell you it ain't mine.

*Dan*

No? Then I'll keep it till I find out who owns it. You better come along with me now.

(*Pulls Roy. Puts gun in his pocket*)

*Dolph*

(*Aside to STEVE*) He's just stallin' about the hoofer. He wants the gun.

*Steve*

Shut up.

*Larry*

Who the hell is this guy, Steve?

*Steve*

He's a dick.

*Bennie*

The one I was telling you about.

*Larry*

Well, what the hell——

*Bennie*

What's the idea hornin' in——what's the idea——

*Steve*

Give him back his rod, Dan—I can settle my own arguments with him.

*Larry*

I'll say we can——

*Dolph*

You tell him.

*Bennie*

You bet you can.

*Dan*

So these are your friends from Chicago?

*Steve*

Listen, Mac, what the hell are you tryin' to do? You been gumshoeing around here all night. For what? Now you come buttin' in here around my party. Understand, *mine!*—— You ain't got a warrant to go tearing around here as you like. This room is private. Now I'll thank you to run along and call it a day—and give the kid back his cap pistol. I can settle my own arguments with him.

(DAN stands surrounded)

*Dan*

I said I'd keep the gun.

*Duke*

You said what?

*Bennie*

Not if Steve says to give it back—you won't.

*Dolph*

Yeah—you bet you won't.

*Larry*

Not while we're here.

*Steve*

Better give it up, Dan, while you're able and take the ozone.

*Dan*

(*Sees he's in tight place—changes his tone*) Well, Steve, you're a damn fine ungrateful guy for the finish—I'll say that. So I been gumshoeing around here all night, have I?

*Steve*

I'll say you have.

*Dan*

Shall I tell you why? You know Scar Edwards was bumped off tonight. You know the minute his mob heard it, they got together, didn't they? And where would they head for? Right here. And who would they be looking for? Why, for you. So I phoned over to the house and gets seven of the

boys to lay around outside in case that mob of Scar's show up.

(STEVE *relaxes his aggressive pose a bit, and the others follow suit*)

*Steve*

You did? You did that, Dan?

*Dan*

Just to protect you. There's three of my men wasting good time out there in back now.

*Steve*

Dan, I didn't know that.

*Dan*

Besides maybe I saved you from getting shot up by this Indian. (*Indicates Roy*) And you yelling your head off about me buttin' in.

*Steve*

But you been hanging around all night asking questions and acting like you really thought I might have had something to do with Scar's bump-off.

*Dan*

Well, I gotta ask questions, Steve, but that don't say I suspect you.

*Roy*

Well, I suspect him.

*Nick*

Oh, shut him up.

*Roy*

And I got a good reason too. (*Points to Dolph*)  
I saw this guy and Steve helping a fellow with a  
scar on his face out the back door there tonight.

*Dolph*

Who, me?

*Steve*

(*Starts for Roy*) You're a liar.

*Dan*

(*Holds arm up—keeps Steve from getting to Roy*) Wait! Wait a minute, Steve. Take it easy.  
(*Pause—To Roy*) What time did you see Steve  
with Scar?

*Roy*

Before the show—about 10 o'clock.

*Steve*

He's lying, Dan.

*Dolph*

Sure he is.

*Dan*

(*To Roy*) Would you know this guy with the  
scar if you saw him again?

*Roy*

Sure I would. I saw them and Billie Moore saw  
them too. They were taking him out that door.  
I asked, "Who's the drunk?" and Steve said, "One  
of the boys we're helping home." If you don't be-

lieve me, ask Billie—she'd never tell nothing but the truth—ask her.

*Steve*

Dan, this kid is sore at me—he's jealous—he made up that rotten lie to get me in bad.

*Dolph*

Sure. Dan can see through him.

*Dan*

Verdis, call in the Moore girl.

(NICK glances at STEVE. STEVE makes sign, so NICK goes up, opens party door)

*Dolph*

(During above, speaks to DAN confidentially)  
Don't believe nothin' this hoofer says. I tell you, he's nuts.

*Dan*

(Impressed) Yeah?

*Nick*

Billie—hey, Billie—come—want to see you a minute.

*Dolph*

Sure—ask anybody—he's an awful liar.

(BILLIE comes in. The other girls struggle after her curious)

*Billie*

What do you want me for?

*Grace*

What's the matter?

*Mazie*

Why ain't you guys paying us attention——

*Ruby*

Shut up, look what's going on.

*Dan*

Miss Moore, (*The room becomes quiet*) Miss Moore, about 10 o'clock tonight, before the show started, when you came down to rehearse with the dancer here, did you see Steve and this gentleman (*Points to DOLPH*) helping a drunken man out the back door?

*Billie*

(*Unable to grasp the situation*) Why——

*Roy*

Tell the truth, Billie.

*Dan*

Did you? A man with a scar on his face?

(*STEVE turns and looks at her—she catches his eye—turns back to DAN—pause*)

*Billie*

No.

(*STEVE shrugs, satisfied, as though to say, "I told you"*)

*Dolph*

I told you that kid was nuts.

*Dan*

(To Girls) Did any of you see Scar here to-night?

*Girls*

No.

(PEARL steps forward, starts to speak, then walks toward stairs)

*Ann*

Who? Somebody else coming?

*Nick*

I'm here all the time. I didn't see him.

*Steve*

Now are you satisfied?

*Dan*

Yes.

*Mazie*

Say, copper, will you do me a favor? Take Personality with you before he tries to make any more trouble here.

*Steve*

Is that all you want, Dan?

*Dan*

That's all for now. (Pulls Roy by the arm)  
Come on, Lane. I'll tell you some more about the Sullivan Act.

*Roy*

You can't take me like this, officer—— Who's going to look after Billie? She don't know what kind he is——

(*The crowd starts back toward party room*)

*Dan*

Come on——

*Roy*

(*Desperately*) No. Wait a minute—— For God's sake give me a chance. She's only a kid. She don't know what she's up against. Mazie, tell him. This Crandall guy is out to grab her——

*Steve*

Take him along.

*Roy*

I'll fix you. (*Breaks away. Makes a rush at STEVE—is stopped by BENNIE*) I'll kill you if you touch her—— I will, God damn you. (*DAN recaptures him; yanks him toward back door*) Lil—somebody—why don't you say something! I don't care what you do to me—— Oh God, Billie.

(*The music starts up. DAN is dragging Roy out*)

CURTAIN

## ACT THREE

In the cabaret the orchestra is just finishing the Battle number. Joe sits on a chair, center, asleep.

Dolph comes down back and looks around—sees Joe.

*Dolph*

(*Growling to himself*) Hey! (Kicks Joe on the sole of the foot waking him with a start) What's the idea?

*Joe*

I'm resting.

(*NICK enters on stairs*)

*Nick*

What's the matter?

*Dolph*

I come in here and find this guy asleep.

*Joe*

The show didn't start yet.

*Nick*

That's enough, Joe.

(*JOE exits muttering*)

*Dolph*

Now, listen, Nick, I gotta get out of here fast.

Steve phoned me to drop in and tell you that the stuff will be here at 3 o'clock.

*Nick*

What's the rush? I wasn't expecting it tonight. Where is Steve anyway?

*Dolph*

I don't know where he is just now, Nick. He might be going out of town for a couple of days. He phoned me to tell you about the truck.

*Nick*

Some trouble come up?

*Dolph*

No, no, everything's all right.

*Nick*

Listen, Dolph, you shouldn't hold out on me. Now, tell me straight what is it? If Steve is in trouble, then I should be the one to know as much as anybody——

*Dolph*

Everything is all right, Nick—everything is perfectly all right.

*Nick*

That hoofer done some pretty wild talking last night—and——

*Dolph*

Hey, don't pay no attention to him. He was sore at Steve, that's all—even McCorn could see that.

*Nick*

Yeh, but he might tell a lot of lies. They got him in jail—and—

*Dolph*

No, they ain't.

*Nick*

No?

*Dolph*

They turned him loose. They gave him the air a couple of hours ago.

*Nick*

Yeh?

*Dolph*

Sure—they could see he didn't have no sense—he was just a false alarm, so they threw him out.

*Nick*

Then why don't he come back to work? I gotta give a show tonight. Half my actors didn't turn up.

*Dolph*

I don't know anything about that. I just wanted to tell you about the truck, that's all. (RUBY appears on stairs in kimona) Hello, Baby, well, Nick—three bells it is, remember. So long. (Starts for door and exits to hall)

*Ruby*

Got any news yet? (He looks up—shrugs shoulders) Well, what d'you say? (She comes down and sits) Looks like we get a night off then—huh?

*Nick*

(*Looks at watch*) Where the hell do you think they is?

*Ruby*

Sleeping it off.

(*JOE enters from up hall with a slip of paper*)

*Joe*

(*Apathetically*) Want to O.K. this?

*Nick*

Don't bother me. (*JOE leans against the door and waits—bored*) Got to think someways to give some kind a show tonight: Pearl not here, Billie not here, Lil not here, the hoofer not here—every other time he's around so much I don't want to see the sight of him—tonight when I need him, where is he? Go on, let me alone.

(*JOE exits to hall again*)

*Ruby*

Steve's party sure busted up the show for fair. That Chicago spendthrift I drew must've been born in Scotland. (*ROY enters back door in street clothes*) Here's God's little gift to the night clubs now.

(*NICK looks at him, waiting for explanation.*

*ROY ignores him—walks to the prop table and begins to collect his belongings*)

*Nick*

Jesus whiz, you're late.

*Roy*

Late for what?

*Nick*

For work.

*Roy*

Ease off, Greek, you didn't think I came back to this bucket of blood to work, did you?

*Nick*

Why not?

*Roy*

After what you slipped me last night?

*Nick*

I don't know what you're talking about.

*Roy*

You thought we parted good friends, did you?

*Nick*

Oh, a little thing like that—we forget—it's just like I says to Steve last night—I says, don't be mad at the hoofer, he can't help it—he's just a little nutty. Now here it is pretty near time for show to go on—I need you, you need me—

*Roy*

No, I don't need you—all I need is what dough I got coming and a chance to pick up my traps and

get out of here. After the raw deal I got last night  
—me keep on working in this shooting gallery?

*Nick*

Listen, Lane—you gotta work—just tonight—

*Roy*

(*Turns away*) What a chance—

*Nick*

(*Seeing that nothing can be gained this way, Nick's manner changes to one of oily flattery*) It ain't for me I ask you to stay—I can get another hoofer—but it's because of the peoples that come here especially to see you, see?

*Roy*

(*Interested*) What?

*Nick*

Already big party come in—they ask me how long before that young fella comes on with that wonderful personality—they say—

*Roy*

Well, wait a minute—you say that—what kind of looking people?

*Nick*

I don't know who they was—very important people—I say, Mr. Lane, he's not in yet, but he's sure to come because he don't never disappoint his public.

*Roy*

I never disappointed my public yet.

*Nick*

That's what I said—— I told 'em about that time in Danbury, Massachusetts. I told 'em what I always said, that you're a real artist and, that no matter what happens I could always count on you, for the very best that's in you.

*Roy*

Listen, I'll go on tonight.

*Nick*

Good.

*Roy*

But I'm leaving at the end of the week—and the doorman can tell anybody that's interested where to find me.

*Ruby*

Mills Hotel.

*Nick*

I knew I could count on you, Lane. Now I'll go out in front and see what I can do. Use the big brain figgerin' how to give a show. Lil not here—nor Billie—nor Pearl—I'll be back.

(*Exit to cabaret*)

*Roy*

They ain't showed up yet, huh?

*Ruby*

That's how I heard it.

*Roy*

I wouldn't go back in this dump neither, if I didn't think it was my duty. (RUBY gives him the bird) My big chance will come; I figure I might as well be eating while I'm waiting for it. Billie's usually on time—wonder what's keeping her tonight?

*Ruby*

The same guy that kept her last night.

*Roy*

Now I ask you, is that nice?

*Ruby*

You going to worry about her after the royal raspberry she slipped you? She's got you goin' round like a top.

*Roy*

I'm thinkin' about the good of the show, that's all. Didn't Nick call up the agents to get a gal to shout in Lil's place?

*Ruby*

Sure, he called 'em, but the agents are no damn good when you want 'em.

*Roy*

It's me that knows that, Sister.

*Ruby*

(Stringing him) Well, how was the dear old jail?

*Roy*

That's all right.

*Ruby*

Come on, spill it, how'd your act go in the night court?

*Roy*

Aw, that don't concern you.

*Ruby*

A mysterious guy. Yeah, if Nick hadn't got you off—

*Roy*

The big baloney never had nothing to do with it; I got myself off.

*Ruby*

What'd you say to 'em?

*Roy*

I told 'em a few things.

*Ruby*

Didn't you even get a fine?

*Roy*

No, I wouldn't stand for it. I gave 'em a little spiel.

*Ruby*

I bet you made quite an impression.

*Roy*

I told 'em who I was—there was a guy there had seen me play on the Poli time; of course that was in my favor. I gave 'em a rough idea what I thought of Steve, too. And that cop that was here—I and him got to be very good friends. He was wise from the start that that wasn't my gun—just a stall to get me out.

*Ruby*

(*Drawing him out*) Go on

*Roy*

Sure. And it was a stall about them other bulls laying outside too. He's a smart cop, that fella, he knows his oats.

*Ruby*

And then they just turned you loose?

*Roy*

Well, listen— (Comes closer, and lowers voice) McCorn told me to keep this under my hat, but I guess it wouldn't get no further with an old-time trouper like you—

*Ruby*

No.

*Roy*

Listen, they took me to the morgue to indentify the other guy.

*Ruby*

Yeah?

*Roy*

Gee, the way these gangsters pop each other off. Well, I guess it's nothing but a lucky break kept me from occupying the slab right next to him.

(BILLIE enters back door. *She and Roy face each other without speaking.* NICK enters down hall)

*Billie*

Ruby——

*Ruby*

So you decided to come?

*Nick*

All right—— I won't say anything—go on—get made up.

*Billie*

I'm terribly sorry—the Trenton train had a break-down.

*Ruby*

Hah! (*Gets up and starts toward stairs*) She wants to have us believe she's been out to see her mother. God, if I ever seen a professional virgin, she's it.

*Nick*

Don't start nothing now—things is worse 'nough.

*Ruby*

All right, sweetheart, but Faith, Hope and Charity is waiting here for news—do we give a show to-night or don't we?

*Nick*

Sure we give a show—we gotta.

*Ruby*

All right, I'll go up and tell the other inmates.

(To BILLIE) Come on, Purity.

(RUBY exits upstairs—NICK turns and hurries into the office. BILLIE has been waiting, hoping that Roy will speak to her—he ignores her and walks to stairs)

*Billie*

(Pleadingly) Roy. (He halts) Roy, I'm terribly glad to find out you didn't get hurt or anything.

*Roy*

(Without turning around) Sure. See you again some time.

*Billie*

I don't think that's a very nice way to act. All I says was I'm glad you didn't get hurt.

*Roy*

It's no thanks to you I didn't.

*Billie*

Everything would have been all right, if you hadn't tried to boss me.

*Roy*

Well, I'm done trying to boss you now. Course I feel kind-a sorry on account of the act.

*Billie*

What do you mean?

*Roy*

On account of its being busted up, I mean.

*Billie*

(Weakly) Is it busted?

*Roy*

Sure.

*Billie*

Oh.

*Roy*

Of course when a fella's worked like I have to get together the best dancing act in the business, and gets all ready for bookings, he hates to see it go blooey just because a big stiff that's rancid with coin comes along and cops his partner.

*Billie*

What right have you got to say he's copped me?

*Roy*

Last night you lied to save him and against me.

*Billie*

Yes, but I didn't know—you got no right talking that way. All the girls around here are always saying I'm too good—and you're saying I'm too bad. I hate this damn place.

*Roy*

And another thing, last night you called me a sap in the presence of several witnesses.

*Billie*

(*Almost in tears*) Oh, shut up. That's what you are.

(*NICK enters from office*)

*Nick*

All right—all right—get made up.

(*BILLIE starts upstairs, so agitated that she scarcely senses NICK's presence. She pauses and leans over the banister*)

*Billie*

And I'll tell you something else, and it's most likely the last thing I'll ever tell you—the reason I went to my Mother's was to ask her, if a girl was terribly in love with a person, so much it was like regular love at first sight, was it all right to marry 'em even if they was poor,—that's what. Now, how'd you like to go to hell?

(*Exit upstairs*)

*Roy*

(*Gazes after her dumfounded. Turns to NICK*)  
They pick up that language quick around this honky-tonk.

*Nick*

She's right. Don't be interfering with her.

*Roy*

Well, they's a lot of personal things mixed up here you don't understand. But I'll tip you off to one thing—my next partner is going to be a man.

*Nick*

Fine. Now, I want to tell you about something.  
(*He sits*) If Steve comes, don't start yowling at him.

*Roy*

(*Gives NICK a look of mild surprise*) I wouldn't.

*Nick*

You done it last night.

*Roy*

I got wise to a lot of things since then—I didn't know those guys would shoot you right out in public.

*Nick*

Well, don't argue with him.

*Roy*

I ain't going to. I don't carry any gatlin' gun. The Sullivan Act is O. K. with me—— For one

thing I wouldn't think it was fair to you for me to get in any argument with him, 'cause if he put a hole in me, your show'd be out in the alley. Of course, if Mr. Crandall cares to meet me over in the Y.M.C.A. gym, I'd just as leave tell him what I think about him.

*Nick*

He's all right, Lane. Good customer. Look—last night, the party alone cost him two thousand dollars, you understand?

*Roy*

I wasn't saying nothing to Steve anyhow—— I was showing Billie the truth about him. He had a fall out of every girl in the place, why couldn't he leave her alone?

*Nick*

Cause all men like what's hard to get.

*Roy*

She had the chance of a life time if she'd only have stuck. It's pretty tough after I had a swell double act framed—— Oh well—nobody never got their name in lights by getting discouraged. (*Tries to snap out of his depression*) Say, what I want to ask you, Boss; what we gonna do for a solo in Lil's spot tonight?

*Nick*

That's what I want to ask you. You sing it.

*Roy*

I might fake up a Mammy song at that.

*Nick*

Sure. (*Slaps his back*) You'll be the whole show tonight.

*Roy*

I am every night. If you don't think so, you're crazy. On the level, boss, I don't know what you'd do without me.

(*PORKY and LIL enter back door. They are both lit, which fact they try to cover up with a great deal of dignity*)

*Lil*

Hello.

*Porky*

I told you this was the place.

*Roy*

We been looking for you, *Lil*.

*Lil*

I was looking for you too. (*Goes to NICK unsteadily*) Shake hands, *Nick*, and guess who I am.

*Nick*

Minnie Stew, that's who you are. What I ought to do is slap a good stiff fine onto you.

(*PORKY bristling*)

*Porky*

Slap?

(*LIL stops him, forces him into chair, center, takes hat off and puts in his lap*)

*Lil*

Don't pay any attention to Nick, Baby, he don't mean anything—it's just the way these foreigners talk.

(*Pats his face*)

*Nick*

Now you are here, would you hurry a little—please.

*Lil*

We been hurrying, Nick—we hurried and hurried. We been the longest time getting here, haven't we, Andrew?

*Porky*

That's right, dearie.

*Nick*

For God's sake, where you been? What's happened to you?

*Lil*

Almost everything—we're married.

(*PORKY goes asleep*)

*Roy*

Holy Gee.

*Nick*

What?

*Lil*

That's the reason we're so proud.

*Roy*

Oh, is that what you are!

*Lil*

The joke's on you. You'll all have to give us presents and everything.

*Nick*

Well, going to work tonight?

*Lil*

Did I return for these purposes?

*Nick*

(*Helping her toward stairs*) Then go up and lie down. I'll send up some coffee—and we'll find a place in the office for Porky.

*Lil*

Andrew—if you please——

*Nick*

All right, Andrew. (*Motions to Roy to take LIL*) Go ahead, Lane.

*Roy*

Come on, Lil, I'll fix you a couch. (*Whispers to LIL*) You ain't got anything on your hip, have you?

*Lil*

Only a birthmark—and you're the first guy that's asked me about it.

(NICK shakes PORKY. *He wakes suddenly and protests as NICK leads him to office*)

*Porky*

I think I'm married.

(NICK and PORKY *exeunt to office*. NICK comes right out and goes to cabaret—mean-time ROY is struggling to get LIL upstairs)

*Roy*

Come on, Lil—I'll help you.

*Lil*

I feel so damn foolish.

*Roy*

Cut it out—lemme help you.

*Lil*

Sure. You help me and I'll help you.

(*Nearly knocks him downstairs*)

*Roy*

Behave yourself, will you? You wouldn't want to have anybody say you missed a performance. Come on now, Lil, this is serious business.

(*LIL exits singing. Roy stops to pick up her handbag which has fallen in the scuffle*)

(*DOLPH comes in back door*)

*Dolph*

(To Roy) Hello, nut—where's Nick?

*Roy*

Find out, wise guy—I dance here. I ain't a waiter. (*Exits to dressing room*)

(DOLPH is followed in by STEVE, who is evidently laboring under considerable repressed excitement. JOE comes in from hall with coffee and crosses to stairs)

*Joe*

Good evening, Mr. Crandall.

*Steve*

Hello, Joe. (To DOLPH) Get outside and do as I told you. (DOLPH goes out back door. STEVE follows JOE) Listen, Joe—I'm not here to anyone tonight. Get that. And tip me if McCorn or any dick blows in. (JOE starts to leave) Wait a second. Don't be in such a hurry. Here— (He hands JOE a bill)

*Joe*

Thanks, Mr. Crandall.

*Steve*

And tell the doorman to turn away anybody he don't know,—and give him this. (Hands JOE another bill. JOE grins) Some of Scar Edwards' playmates might try to crash in looking for trouble.

(NICK comes in from hall) I got my own lookout men planted, but I'm taking no chances.

*Nick*

Hurry along with that, Joe. (JOE goes upstairs) Hello, Steve. (JOE exits upstairs) What's the matter? You look sick.

*Steve*

(He has lost his hard assurance—he is nervous—his face almost twitches—he can't stand still. He speaks very quietly) I ain't feeling as well as I could.

*Nick*

No?

*Steve*

(Takes off his hat) Look at that lid.

*Nick*

Huh?

*Steve*

Look at that hole?

*Nick*

Sure, I see it—Cigarette?

*Steve*

No—bullet.

*Nick*

(Impressed) For God's sake.

*Steve*

Just a minute ago. I'm standing down here in the middle of the block—in front of the Midtown Garage talking to Dolph, when buzz—(*Puts hat on*) it goes through my hat.

*Nick*

Mmm! (*To show his concern*) Who done it?

*Steve*

That's the hell of it. I don't know.

*Nick*

I mean, where'd it come from?

*Steve*

That's what I'm telling you—there wasn't a sound—whatever took a crack at me must of had a silencer on his gat—

*Nick*

(*Guttural exclamation*) Ohoo!

*Steve*

There wasn't anyone on the street—that is, anyone but what seemed to be walking along minding his own business—but just as the shot went through my lid, a taxicab across the street started up and went toward Sixth Avenue like a bat out of hell—but there was only a woman in it.

*Nick*

A woman?

*Steve*

Yeh—it couldn't been her—I don't think. It must have come from some of those windows on the second floor—Scar Edwards' mob, I guess—they use silencers—

*Nick*

Whoo—that's bad, Steve—extra bad.

*Steve*

An inch lower and it would have been a lot worse. It's good I planned to get out of here when I did.

*Nick*

You goin' tonight?

*Steve*

Yeh. (*Walks toward back door—restless*) Get me a drink, will you? (*NICK goes into office and comes out with bottle. JOE comes downstairs and goes toward hall*) Joe—don't forget to give that bill to the doorman.

*Joe*

No, sir. (*Exits to hall as NICK returns from office with glass and bottle*)

*Nick*

Where you going?

*Steve*

(*Comes to NICK—takes drink*) I'll lay in with some friends up in Montreal for the time being.

(PEARL enters back door. She comes in fearfully, sees them and pulls herself together. STEVE turns quickly at sound of door—but seeing who it is, relaxes again)

*Nick*

About time!

*Steve*

(Perfunctorily) Hello, Pearl.

*Nick*

Hurry up, you're late, don't waste any time.

(PEARL hurries upstairs)

*Nick*

If you didn't croak Scar Edwards, what you blowin' for?

*Steve*

(Walking away from him) I can make my plans without your help, Nick.

*Nick*

Sure. (Watches him) You taking Billie with you?

*Steve*

That's some more of your business.

*Nick*

I want to know if I gotta get a new gal, that's all.

*Steve*

(Crosses to NICK, who pours another drink and passes it to him) Well, I'm taking her all right,

but she don't know it yet, so you don't need to advertise. I prefer to get 'em without being rough—but I'm pressed for time, so I'll have to try Dolph's stuff this crack. (*Drinks*) Now I gotta get hold of Porky.

*Nick*

He's here.

*Steve*

He is?

*Nick*

In there. Drunker than hell—he got married.

*Steve*

He got what?

*Nick*

Sure, to Lil. They both come in while ago stewed to the gills.

*Steve*

To Lil? Gee! Well, will you tell me why he fell for that big horse?

*Nick*

Maybe she ain't your kind—but them big broads that's been all through the war sometimes make pretty women at home.

*Steve*

Oh, I ain't boosting for Porky—at that, I think Lil got the worst of it. Let's take a lamp at him, I want to see what he looks like married.

*(As they start to enter office, STEVE sees BILLIE coming downstairs. He gestures to NICK to go ahead. NICK exits—STEVE comes back to meet BILLIE)*

Hello, beautiful. Well, you look as sweet as sugar—How's tricks?

*Billie*

All right. (BILLIE is ill at ease with him. She hurries up to the table with her props, trying to be casual, but betraying a new manner toward STEVE, that almost amounts to suspicion) I came in late and then I hurried so—that I'm about the first one ready.

*Steve*

Found the folks all right, did you?

*Billie*

Oh, fine.

*Steve*

That's good. That gives me a great deal of pleasure. Of course we missed not having you stay for the finish of the party last night.

*Billie*

Well, you were awfully nice about letting me go home, Mr. Crandall.

*Steve*

Well, I'll tell you, Billie girl, any time I'm not nice, you remind me and I'll get nice, 'cause as far

as you're concerned, that's the way I want to be, see?

*Billie*

Of course I don't understand about the detective and everything.

*Steve*

Of course you don't, Girlie, but I'll explain it to you. It's just politics—that's all. I'll tell you all about it after the show tonight. It'll be very interesting. You're going for a ride with me tonight you know.

*Billie*

Well, I don't know. (*He has taken her hand, she draws it away, as tho by accident, and steps back*)

*Steve*

You haven't forgotten. That was a promise—you wouldn't try to go back on that.

*Billie*

Well—

*Steve*

(*Quite frantic*) You did promise—don't forget that—

*Billie*

I wouldn't go back on my promise—

(*MAZIE enters on stairs*)

*Mazie*

Hello, Steve.

*Steve*

(*Mutters*) Hello, Mazie. (MAZIE's presence drives him away. He starts for office then turns back and touches her arm as tho he wanted to assure himself that she were still there—almost reverently) Don't forget now—(*Exits to office*)

*Mazie*

(*Comes downstairs*) I see he's still friends.

(*RUBY enters stairs*)

(*ROY and GIRLS come downstairs. They all wear the costumes for opening number as in Act I*)

*Ruby*

Yeh, she promised to come early and shave my neck.

(*NICK enters from office*)

*Mazie*

Well, here we are for the merry-merry.

*Nick*

Now remember, some pep tonight.

*Mazie*

I'm full of pep and no control.

*Roy*

Save your pep, kid—you may need it. (Goes to cabaret doors—he steps out) Good evening, folks. (*The doors close behind him*)

*Ruby*

If that's pep, I never smelled gin.

*Mazie*

Listen, Dizzy—you won't smell anything again—  
'cause I'm going to bust your smeller. (*She starts*)

*Billie*

Mazie, behave yourself.

*Grace*

What is this, Grand Street?

*Ann*

My head aches.

*Ruby*

Wait till the show's over—I'll show you.

(*BILLIE pulls MAZIE. GRACE holds RUBY*)

*Mazie*

Why wait?

(*Roy comes back from cabaret and pushes between them*)

*Roy*

That's enough of this. You can't go out there scrapping like that. I don't want my stuff spoiled. I got friends out there—agents and managers—looking me over every night.

*Mazie*

Oh, I forgot—I ain't used to working with these headline acts.

*Roy*

Well, there's lots worse than me headlining,  
sister—

*Mazie*

Well, for Gawd sake, what did I say?

(*Buzzer sounds—lights flash*)

*Roy*

Come on—quit it—line up. Let's unravel our  
daily dozen. Every night's a first night. Give 'em  
your best.

(*The music swells as the doors open and they  
dance out. As Roy is going thru the doors,  
STEVE enters from office—Roy thumbs his  
nose at him and exits*)

*Steve*

(*Looks out after him*) You'd think last night  
would a-took all the freshness out of that hoofer,  
wouldn't you?

*Nick*

Huh—forget it. I'm going to fire him.

*Steve*

You don't need to bother—I'll tend to him my-  
self when I get the time. I don't want to have it  
happen too quick after his visit with McCorn.  
(*Moves about nervously*) He hasn't been around  
tonight, has he?

*Nick*

Who?

*Steve*

McCorn.

*Nick*

No. Why? You want to see him?

*Steve*

That's just what I don't want to do. I thought he might come snoopin' around again.

*Nick*

You afraid of him—Dan McCorn?

*Steve*

Me? What for? He ain't got nothing on me—not a thing.

*Nick*

Sure he ain't—so why get excited?

*Steve*

Well, I'll tell you, Nicholas—a guy like McCorn gets on my nerve—he don't say anything—he don't make any accusations, but that damn rotten slow way of talking he's got, and that dirty smile—you know—sorta gets me ragged. Now what the hell did he want to take my gun for last night?

*Nick*

Well, after all, Steve, none of us ain't got no right to carry a gat—

*Lil*

(Comes from dressing room, starts downstairs)  
Where's my husband?

(STEVE looks her over and shakes his head and  
exits to office)

*Nick*

He's all right, *Lil*.

*Lil*

Tell him his little wife—No, I'll tell him myself.

(She finds that coming downstairs backward  
is lots easier)

*Nick*

Feel better now, *Lil*? All ready for going on?

*Lil*

Say, *Nick*, please can I cut my first number? I  
can do it, if I have to, but I ain't just set.

*Nick*

(Resigned) All right—go on out—sit down, drink  
some more black coffee and see the show.

*Lil*

Thanks, old timer—you're a true friend. That's  
just what I said to Andrew—I says, if ever your  
little Lillie had a true friend—it's that greasy  
Greek, *Nick Verdis*.

(PORKY enters from office)

(LIL crosses to PORKY)

I'm going out and see the show, darling.

*Porky*

I'll go with you, dearie.

*Lil*

Take my arm, sweetheart, and keep the hell off  
my feet.

(*They exeunt to cabaret*)

(*GIRLS and ROY come in from cabaret. GIRLS  
put props on table*)

*Roy*

Well, we ruined 'em, Boss—

*Nick*

Listen, Lane, Lil ain't able to work—I gotta find  
something to fill that spot.

*Roy*

Better give 'em an orchestra specialty.

*Nick*

They'll get sick of that too before the night's  
over. Listen, I been thinking—I'll take a chance—  
how'd you like to break in your act with Billie—  
huh?

*Roy*

(*MAZIE pokes BILLIE, and the girls show interest*)  
What?

*Nick*

You can do it for the next number.

*Roy*

No—the act is split—it's off—all busted up.

*Nick*

Listen, you been talkin' about it—rehearsin' and everything—now I give you a chance—

*Roy*

I'd like to do it for you, Boss, but I ain't got a partner.

*Nick*

(To BILLIE) What's the matter? You won't work?

*Billie*

I didn't say I wouldn't. He don't want me any more.

*Nick*

(To BILLIE) Go on. (*She runs upstairs, excited and happy*) Just because I need the two of you, you're busted up. This is a chance for you. Come on, I ask it for special favor. There's a orchestra number first, so you got lots of time. I'll give the agent a good report, no matter how rotten it is.

*Roy*

As long as Miss Moore wants to do it I'm willing to, just to keep the show going.

*Nick*

Fine. (To others) We'll do the Hawaiian number after that.

(*The girls start to break up—some going toward stairs, others to tables to put down props*)

*Roy*

We didn't rehearse to-day.

(*Roy starts warming up with some dance steps*)

*Mazie*

Can we go out to the tables and watch, Mr. Verdis?

*Nick*

Sure, go ahead.

*Ruby*

(*Going upstairs*) They'll die standing up.

*Mazie*

(*As PEARL starts upstairs*) Come on, Pearl, and watch 'em, why don't you?

*Pearl*

I'll change first and be right out.

*Roy*

Mazie, tell Brophy to play my introduction music when this orchestra number is over—he'll know what you mean.

*Mazie*

Sure.

(*Exeunt MAZIE, GRACE and ANN to hall. NICK takes pencil and paper and plans his pro-*

gram. Roy in the midst of his dancing suddenly gets a thought. He walks over to NICK importantly)

*Roy*

Boss, there's gotta be a better understanding about the money in the future—

*Nick*

Maybe after you do this act you have no future.  
(Laughs)

*Roy*

Razzin' me, eh? All right, after tonight you gotta struggle along without me. How do you like them grapes?

*Nick*

Aw, you can't take a joke. You and me, Lane, we'se friends. Go on now, like a good fellow. Maybe I'll have a sign fixed with your name in lights.

*Roy*

Well, how big a sign?

*Nick*

I'll tell you after I see the act. (*Exits to hall*)

(BILLIE enters stairs)

*Billie*

We might as well go on and try it, now that we rehearsed it so much, even if you don't like me any more.

*Roy*

(*Hooking her dress*) It isn't a question of liking you. But when I get a throw-down like last night, I get wise to myself.

*Billie*

Well, when I get a throw-down like I just got today, I'm wise to myself too. But lots of people that don't like each other, they still work together. I mean, if you still think we'd make a good team, then it's just a business proposition. A couple can be in the same act without being crazy about each other.

*Roy*

Well, I used to think we'd make about the best combo I could imagine—but I'm the kind of a guy I don't want to butt in where I ain't wanted. (*Sniffs*) You want to run over a few of them steps? (*BILLIE nods*) Just remember your routine, that's all you got to do.

*Billie*

Let's try the finish—that's where we got mixed up at the last rehearsal.

*Roy*

All you gotta do is follow me. Watch me out the corner of your eye and you can't go wrong. (*Takes place to do steps. She puts arms around*

*his neck, pulling their cheeks together. He takes her hand away and places it at waist)* Down here.

*Billie*

The last time we did it this way.

*Roy*

Well, that was the last time. We'll do it now the old way. (*Stops acting and looks away from her*) You see, it's kinda spoiled it for me, thinkin' you might have had your arms around Steve that way.

*Billie*

I haven't. (*Pause*) And when I lied last night about the drunken man, it was because I had promised Steve to say that, and I didn't know a thing about that you'd said the opposite. And I went home alone last night.

*Roy*

(*Looks at her—melts*) We'll do the finish the new way—like this. (*Puts her arm around his neck*) Billie, you know that, what you asked your mother when you went home today—about marryin' a poor fellow?

*Billie*

Yeah—

*Roy*

Well. (*Buzzer. They jump apart*) Never mind. You can tell me later. We gotta think of our work

now. On your toes, baby—don't get nervous. (At door) Listen, Mr. Verdis is makin' an announcement—sensational newcomers—Roy Lane and Company—Oh Boy, don't that make you feel proud?

*Billie*

(Overcome with sudden panic) Roy—I'm scared—

*Roy*

Don't be scared—remember I'm right beside you. It'll all be over before you know it.

*Billie*

Roy, I don't believe I can go on. Can't we wait till tomorrow till we have a chance to rehearse?

*Roy*

Pull yourself together. We can't have no stage fright gummin' our act. I'll give you a sock in a minute. There's our music. We'll finish in a blaze of glory. (Pulls her to entrance—blesses himself) Lots of snap now. We'll show 'em. Let's go.

(They exit to cabaret, dancing gaily)

(DAN McCORN enters hall. JOE follows)

*Joe*

No strangers allowed back here—Mister.

*Dan*

That's all right Aloy-ious. I'm no stranger.

*Joe*

Well, you can't—

(NICK comes in from other end of hall)

*Dan*

Oh yes I can—

*Joe*

No, you can't.

*Nick*

Joe! (Signals him to go)

(JOE exits to hall sulkily)

*Dan*

Evening, Nick.

*Nick*

What you doin' back here?

*Dan*

Just thought I'd drop in and say hello. Steve around?

*Nick*

Nope, I ain't seen him all day.

*Dan*

He'll be in later, though, won't he?

*Nick*

(Sits.) No—he won't come tonight. He had such a big night last night—y'understand. You want to see him?

*Dan*

Nothing in particular. They'll be lots of other chances. Have a good time last night?

*Nick*

No, them kinda things make me sick. You gotta do it, understand, but it ain't no fun. When I get drunk for pleasure, that's one thing—but when I get drunk for business, daugh! No—no.

*Dan*

Sure. All the girls stay?

*Nick*

Yes, I guess so. I don't know. I got cock-eyed awful soon. I ain't sure of nothing last night.

*Dan*

Well, guess I'll blow. My partner's waiting for me outside.

*Nick*

Is he waiting like them other bulls you told Steve about last night?

*Dan*

(Smiles) No, he's waiting.

*Nick*

You're a pretty slick guy, Mac—you put it over on me, too.

*Dan*

(Still smiling) Oh, you're all wrong, Nick—they were there.

*Nick*

Yea, like hell. Well, it's all right with me—put me in awful bad—them Chicagoes started everything.

*Dan*

That's a bad bunch a bail-hoppers, Nick. On the level, I could a grabbed a couple of 'em—but it wouldn't get me anything. We don't want 'em here in New York.

*Nick*

Steve tells me they're goin' back to Chicago in a couple of days—

*Dan*

I thought you said you didn't see Steve all day?

*Nick*

(*Pause—caught*) I didn't—he called me on the phone—he told me—

*Dan*

Oh! (*Pause*) Well, see you later.

*Nick*

You coming round again?

*Dan*

Oh, I don't mean tonight.

*Nick*

Well, that's good. You're a fine fellow, Mac, but every time you come in my cabaret, about twenty people goes out.

*Dan*

You got nothing to fear from me, Nick.

(RUBY and PEARL enter from dressing rooms.

*They have changed to next chorus costume—  
they come down the stairs)*

*Nick*

I know that, but it looks bad when you're round  
so much.

*Ruby*

My Gawd, this place is getting like Headquarters  
—every time you come into a room around here,  
you fall over a badge.

*Nick*

Mac's just visiting. Besides, you shut up.

*Ruby*

(Going toward hall) Is that act out there so bad  
you can't look at it?

*Dan*

(As PEARL crosses toward cabaret) Hello there.

*Pearl*

Hello.

(Girls exeunt to cabaret)

*Dan*

She's still around, huh?

*Nick*

Why not?

*Dan*

I thought that party last night would be too much for her.

*Nick*

These kids I got are tanks—they can drink any ten men under.

*Dan*

Well, be good. I'll take a peek at this new act of yours. (*Exits to hall*)

(*NICK peeks out to be sure DAN is not coming back. STEVE has opened office door slowly. He comes out; almost twitching with nervousness*)

*Steve*

God damn him, what does he want?

*Nick*

Nothing important, he says. Just asked for you. I said you wasn't here like you told me.

*Steve*

He's got nothing on me. Not a thing—

(*PEARL walks down hall quickly, just glancing in as she passes double doors and disappears*)

*Nick*

Say, listen, what the hell's the matter with you? Soon as somebody mentions this dick McCorn, you go up in the air. What's the reason for this?

*Steve*

I'm all shot, I tell you. Too much booze last night, I guess, and—Oh, a lot of things—(*There is a noise of someone trying back door under stairs, then a knock. STEVE rises, controls himself and sits again*) Take a look first!

*Nick*

(Peeks out) It's Dolph.

(NICK unbolts the door, opens it. DOLPH enters)

*Steve*

What's the matter?

*Dolph*

(Frightened) Why—I—a—

*Steve*

What the hell is it?

*Dolph*

There's a guy out there been walking up and down—passed by a dozen times—makes me all nervous.

*Steve*

A dick?

*Dolph*

Either that or one of Scar Edwards' bunch—nobody I seen before.

*Nick*

There's a lot of people walk up and down—it's a free country almost. What's to be afraid of? You guys ain't done nothing.

*Dolph*

Ain't there some way for you to get out of here, Steve—now—before—

*Steve*

No, I'm not ready yet. I'll break cover in an hour. Go on, wait out there.

*Dolph*

But it ain't safe out there. One of the Edwards crowd might take a shot at me, with a silencer.

*Steve*

Go on out—stick by that back entrance like I told you to. You're my right hand man, ain't you?

*(Slaps him on back. Pushes him out)*

*Dolph*

Sure! All right.

*(Exits out back door. STEVE closes door and bolts it)*

*Nick*

I don't get this business, Steve.

*Steve*

Listen, Nick, you and I been best kind of pals for a long time. I'd shoot the works for you and I hope you would for me.

*Nick*

Sure I would. What you want?

*Steve*

I'm going to blow tonight. I don't want to have any slips. This damn bull McCorn is getting too curious. He thinks some of my mob got Edwards.

*Nick*

Did they?

*Steve*

No, they didn't. Now listen, I want you to get Joe or someone you can trust to beat it over to Charlie's and tell him to bring his car, not mine, they know mine—and leave it at the back entrance for me.

*Nick*

You can phone him.

*Steve*

No, these dicks might have the wires tapped. Sending Joe is safer. After the show, I'll take Billie and a couple of these broads and pile in the car. Looks like we're going for a joy ride, savvy? Then if they trail us, when I get 'em out on the Post

Road, I can lose 'em, see, but they won't think I'm going to blow, so long as I got the girls with me. I can get rid of the ones I don't want later on.

*Nick*

You go to lots of trouble just 'cause a bull's asking questions. My Gawd, Steve, where's your guts?

*Steve*

You think I'm yellow, huh? I don't want no man thinking that. Listen, Nick. (*Takes him roughly by wrist and comes close*) I did that job myself. (*NICK motions quiet with both hands*) Now, they can't get me for it—they got nothing on me but that gun—but it's getting on my nerves—I'm getting ragged and I want to get out of here. Now, have you got it?

*Nick*

Sure, I understand. But don't bump nobody else off in here.

*Steve*

You won't get in trouble—I'll fix that. Now send for the car.

*Nick*

Sure, right away—you wait in the office, Steve.

(*He hurries into cabaret. STEVE goes to big door under stairs, peeks out cautiously through peep hole—then crosses to cabaret*

*doors, closes them. As he does so, the party door opens, and PEARL steps in with a pistol in her hand. It has a silencer affixed)*

*Pearl*

*(Low) Turn around, Rat! (He wheels about)*  
I don't want to give it to you like you did him—  
in the back.

*Steve*

*(He can't move) For Christ's sake, don't!*

*Pearl*

I'm giving you more chance than you gave him—  
I'm looking at you—and the last thing you see before you go straight to hell is Jim Edwards' woman, who swore to God she'd get you.

*Steve*

*(Backing away) Don't—don't kill me—don't—*

*Pearl*

Whine, you rat—I knew you would.

*(She fires. There is just a pish as the gun goes off, a slight curl of smoke. STEVE lurches toward office and falls out of sight as he clutches at the door. PEARL stands paralyzed by the violence of her act. Then she thrusts the pistol into her handbag and scurries upstairs like a frightened rabbit. Before she*

*is out of sight RUBY opens the cabaret doors and comes in laughing derisively)*

*Ruby*

Ha! A total loss!

*(The other girls follow down hall as BILLIE and Roy rush in from cabaret. There is some applause)*

*Mazie*

Them guys don't know a good act when they see it.

*Roy*

Come on, Billie, it's good for a bow.

*(BILLIE and Roy run back)*

*Ruby*

And they even steal a bow.

*Ann*

And they rehearsed it, too.

*(BILLIE and Roy enter)*

*Billie*

How do you think it went?

*Grace*

That bunch are full of novocaine.

*Ruby*

You'd be a riot in the Palace.

*Roy*

We could have grabbed another. That detective and Nick crabbed our act with their argument. How could we get attention, everybody watching them. Gee, what a rotten break. Well, go on up, kids, make your change. I'll give the leader a buzz —see how they like it.

*(He exits to hall while girls start upstairs)*

*Billie*

I did my best.

*Mazie*

Sure you did, kid, cheer up. I don't think it's as bad as they say it is.

*(The girls go out. DAN and NICK are heard arguing. They enter from hall)*

*Nick*

Dan, you're getting me sore, y' understand—I gotta right to send any of my waiters any place I want—without any advice from you.

*Dan*

*(Pulling him around)* Now listen to me, Greek—I been pretty nice to you in a lotta ways—now you get this—you don't want to be accused of helping some guy that's wanted for murder, do you?

*Nick*

No, but I—

*Dan*

Then listen to me; before you do any more for Steve Crandall I want to have a talk with him; and after that you can do as you please. I been waiting around here until your show was over before I started anything—because I didn't want to give your dump any worse name than it's got. So keep out of my business and you won't have to sit in a witness chair. Now, I happen to know Steve's here. Come on; where is he? Where is he? (NICK motions his head toward office) Tell him I want to see him. (NICK goes reluctantly to office. He opens door and draws back with a gasp) What's the matter? (Dan runs to door, sizes up situation, and steps past him into the room) Come in. Shut the door. (They go to office. NICK fearfully—the door is shut)

(RUBY enters, half dressed, followed by MAZIE, who catches her on stairs and chokes her—bending her over the banisters)

*Mazie*

Now you're going to eat mud.

*Ruby*

Quit.

*Mazie*

Now what am I the son of?

*Ruby*

You're an angel.

*Mazie*

Say uncle—

*Ruby*

Uncle.

*Mazie*

(Releases her) Now, get back, I'd drop you over if I wasn't feeling so good natured.

(RUBY exits. MAZIE dusts off her hands as ROY enters with a rush. He has supper card in his hand)

*Roy*

Look, Mazie—look at this—I got this from Mike Shea—he just caught our act.

*Mazie*

Who's he?

*Roy*

He's one of the biggest booking agents in New York—he wrote me on this supper card—

*Mazie*

Mike Shea? Never heard of him—

*Roy*

(At top of stairs) Listen, what he wrote. At last I got a break. "I can offer you and partner

Chambersburgh and Pottsville next week—”  
Billie, Billie.

*(Runs out to dressing rooms)*

*Mazie*

*(Laughs)* That's one for the book! *(Follows him)*

*(NICK comes out of office, looking under great stress—DAN follows)*

*Dan*

He's dead all right. *(NICK moans)* Right thru the old pump.

*Nick*

*(Turning back to him—suddenly alive)* Lane! The hoofer! He's the one. He killed Steve. I'll betcha. He was out to get him.

*Dan*

The actor, you mean?

*(PEARL enters on stairs—she starts down—hears the voices and halts)*

*Nick*

Sure! He's been tryin' to get him. He's been lyin' about him.

*Dan*

No, it wasn't Lane—it was suicide.

*Nick*

Suicide?

*Dan*

Sure. (*Fascinated, PEARL comes slowly down stairs, her hands against the back wall. DAN talks to NICK, his eye on the girl*) Here's Steve's own gun—with one chamber empty.

*Nick*

I thought you had that?

*Dan*

I gave it back to Steve today.

*Nick*

But Steve said—

*Dan*

I said I gave it back to him today. He knew I was going to pinch him, so he took the shortest way out. I'm calling up headquarters to report it suicide—so that's what it is.

*Nick*

All right—all right—whatever you say.

*Dan*

Give me the key to this door. (*NICK gives him key to the door; DAN locks it. PEARL sinks to the chair by piano*) I want to keep everyone out of there till the Coroner gets here. I'll wait for him out back, (*He starts to back door; as he passes*

PEARL *he speaks disinterestedly—out of the corner of his mouth*) Pull yourself together, kid.

(*Exits back door*)

(PEARL *lets her head fall forward, weak with relief, as DAN exits and the other girls and ROY enter on stairs, laughing and joking excitedly*)

*Mazie*

Pottsville and Chambersburgh, Gawd, Billie, you must love this guy.

*Billie*

I certainly do.

*Roy*

I been so busy gettin' the act framed, I ain't had time to show you how much I love you. But here goes.

(*Roy and BILLIE embrace*)

*Ann*

My Gawd, in front of everybody—

*Grace*

When do you two play the matrimonial circuit—

*Mazie*

Break! Time!

*Ruby*

Look at 'em.

(*GIRLS laughing and pulling BILLIE and ROY apart*)

*Nick*

*(Bursting out suddenly—his nerves unable to stand their hilarity)* Cut out this noise—I—ah—we gotta cut it out, y' understand.

*(They stand dumfounded by his violence. The buzzer sounds—and Roy snaps back to his job)*

*Roy*

There goes the gong, girls. All ready! Come on, Pearl. Gee, I'm happy. Our names will be in bright lights soon. Roy Lane and Co. Remember you're all artists. Here we go—here we go—

*(The girls form in line and dance into cabaret singing as NICK crosses himself and prays leaning against the door as though half fainting)*

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